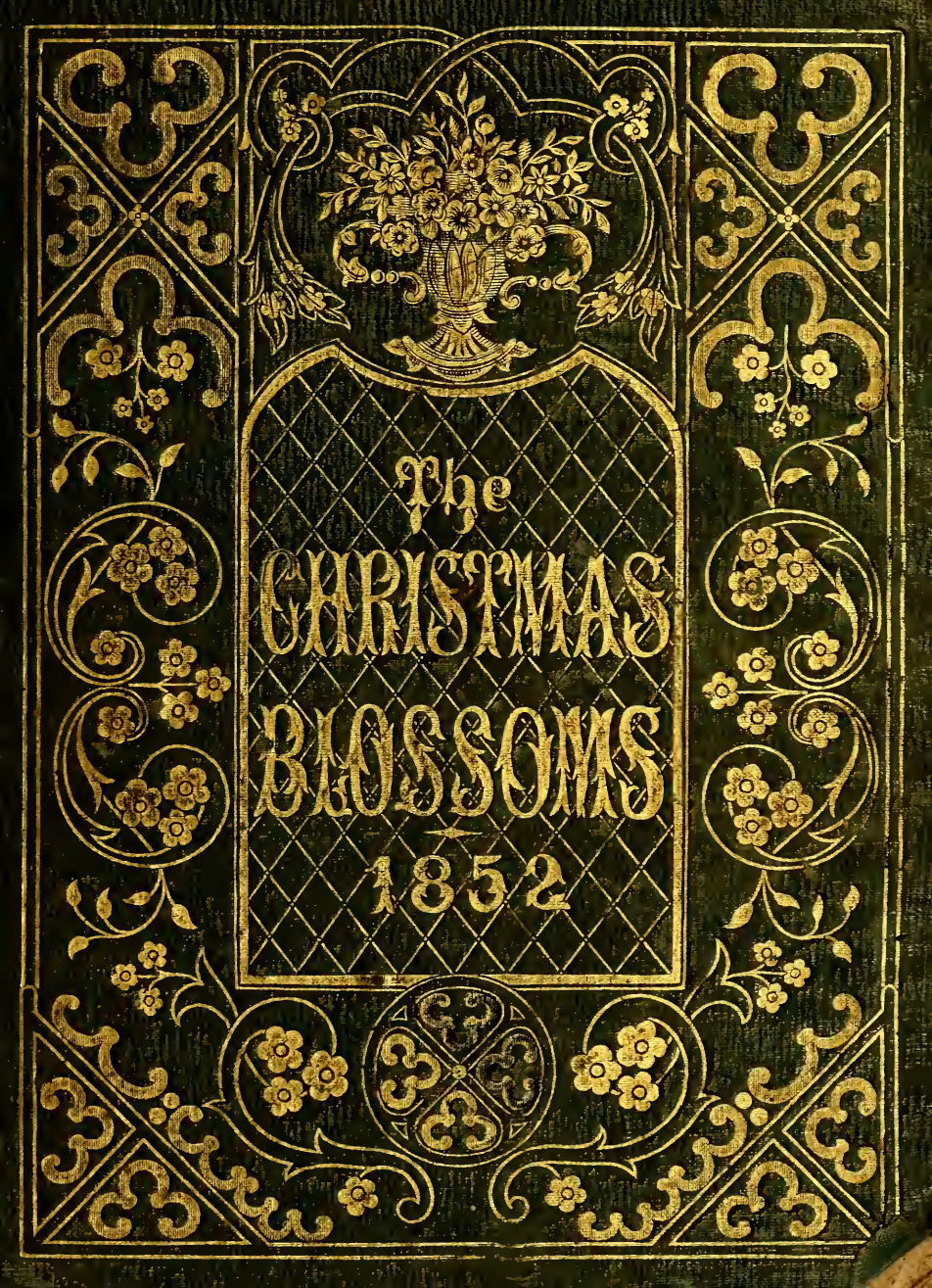
The
CHRISTMAS
BLOSSOMS
1852

UNIVERSITY OF N.C. AT CHAPEL HILL
00022094715

Presented

To Miss Maria. Berry

By W. Elm. St.

June 1st 1852.

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CHRISTMAS BLOSSOMS,

AND

NEW-YEAR'S WREATH,

FOR

MDCCCLII.

BY UNCLE THOMAS.

PHILADELPHIA:
PUBLISHED BY E. H. BUTLER & CO.
1852.

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1851,

BY E. H. BUTLER AND CO.,

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

Advertisement.

THE Publishers of the Christmas Blossoms once more make their bow to their little patrons, and wish them all happiness and pleasure at this merry-making season. They are sorry to find that they boasted almost too strongly, last year, when they said "Uncle Thomas never grows old," for he sends them word that he now has to walk with a cane; that he cannot ride, as he once could, forty miles a day, on horseback, and has to ask some one of his dear little readers to tie his shoestrings for him of mornings; for it hurts his back to stoop. But we find that, the older he grows, the more interesting he becomes, and we are very sure that all the little ones will clap their hands when they see the Christmas Blossoms for 1852, and that they will say they are prettier than ever.

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CHRISTMAS BLOSSOMS.

UNCLE THOMAS'S PLAN.

It is now several years since Uncle Thomas first began to print the Christmas Blossoms for the amusement of little boys and girls; and nearly all the little boys and girls that used to read his stories at first, have gone off to college or boarding-school, and have no time to attend to him. Indeed, some of them have grown up into great big men and nice little women, and would not care to sit and chat with him as they used to do, about dogs and cats, and birds and fishes,—about the sea and the land, and foreign countries.

But Uncle Thomas still loves the little ones as

well as ever. Indeed, as his hair grows grayer, and his sight begins to fail, he seems to love them more, instead of less. He cannot now go travelling, as he did in former years, over Mexico and South America, and Old England and the East Indies, gathering bugs and butterflies, and snakes and lizards, and all the while studying their manners and habits, and their little ways, in order to see if he could not find in them something to teach even men and women, that they are not the only beings for whom our heavenly Father made the world;—that there was something else to be looked at, in town and country, besides dress, the fashions, the crops, and the dollars we get for them.

Uncle Thomas is a little lame, now, with the rheumatism, and he walks with a cane, and cannot spring on his horse, or jolt sixty miles a day in a stage-coach; but the less able he becomes to run about and see sights, the more fond he grows of talking about what he has seen and heard, and where he has been.

The other day, just before Christmas, Uncle Thomas stepped in to see Mrs. Julia Manners. Nobody thinks of *being formal with him*, and he is never

formal with anybody else; so, when the chamber-maid answered the bell, she looked very smilingly, as soon as she saw who it was; and the old gentleman walked right into the parlour, without waiting for the servant to open the door. Sure enough, there was Mrs. Manners and her two youngest children, making themselves quite at home, for they expected no company. Mrs. Manners had a book in her hand, as if she had been reading; but I rather think she did not read much, for there was dear little Anna, just seven years old, leaning upon her lap, and asking a question, at least, to every five words, while Charlie, the sweetest lad that ever warmed a mother's heart, had climbed up by the arm of her chair, and lay lolling across her shoulders, with one arm thrown forward over her bosom, like a strap, and the rest of his body crowded in between her and the chair-back, like the knapsack of a soldier when he sits on a high seat to rest himself. Look at the frontispiece of this little book, and you will see how they appeared.

"Now, do not rise, Mrs. Manners," exclaimed Uncle Thomas, as he limped into the room; "I

would not disturb such a lovely group for the world! It makes a beautiful picture."

But, before he had quite done speaking, Anna, tripping joyously across the room, had taken his left hand and pressed it to her cheek, while her eyes looked modestly at the carpet, and her face grew warm with the silent rushing of her pulse. Charlie had dismounted from his lofty perch, at the expense of a harmless tumble, and was tugging away at the cane, for the purpose of remounting upon it as a hobby, though his infant dress, considerably longer than that of the Bloomers, would have seriously incommoded him, had he been permitted to accomplish his purpose. Meanwhile, Mrs. Manners had also advanced, and finding Uncle Thomas with both hands thus fully engaged, she was obliged to content herself with a deep courtesy, and then she wheeled towards him the damask-cushioned arm-chair, in which the old gentleman immediately seated himself, without any apology; for, well-bred people never waste time in begging to be excused, when their friends are disposed to do them honour. Such con-

duct is as vulgar as it is to press upon our visiters attentions that they have once gravely declined.

When Charlie was comfortably fixed on Uncle Thomas's knee, and Anna had drawn her stool by his side, Mrs. Manners returned to her place, and said:

"How delighted I am to see you once more! You never appear, dear Uncle Thomas, without scattering blessings around you, and I do not wonder that the children love you so! Augustus and Julian will return from school directly, and they too will be overjoyed."

"You almost unman me," replied the old gentleman; "you know I do not like flattery, Mrs. Manners, and you make me blush like a girl, by your excessive panegyric."

"Pan—pane—panegyric! what is that? It's a very big word," said Anna.

"My child!" exclaimed the mother, "how can you be so pert? Little girls should never interrupt older persons when speaking."

"I am glad, indeed," rejoined Uncle Thomas, "I am very glad, to find that you do not quote that

foolish and unfounded old saying, 'Little children were made to be seen, and not heard.' They were made to observe and ask questions;—but not to interrupt, unless on certain occasions," he added, addressing little Anna, who was looking down, with a tear in her eye. "But, madam," said he, "your daughter did not interrupt me. I had finished my sentence, and she only asked a question about it very quickly, to save time, I suppose; and time is the most valuable of all wealth." (Anna looked up with a smile.) "And now, with your permission, I will answer her question.

"Panegyric, my dear, means *high praise*, and, generally, it is understood to mean *somewhat unreasonable praise*."

"Just such praise, my child," said the mother, "as Uncle Thomas bestowed upon us when he entered and found you at my knee, and Charlie on my shoulders." (Uncle Thomas cast a lackadaisical glance at Mrs. Manners, but she spoke on, without heeding it.) "And now, my dear sir, as it is really a blessing as well as a pleasure to enjoy your society, let me ask whether your engagements will not permit

you to make your home with *us* during the Christmas holidays? All our children have been so much delighted with the 'Christmas Blossoms,' in which you have described your holiday visits for the last five or six years, that they have been teasing me, for a month past, to invite you to be with us this year. They want to be ranked among your heroes and heroines of the next volume, themselves."

Just at this moment, in rushed Augustus and Julian, two lads, the oldest twelve and the younger ten years of age.

"Oh, Uncle Thomas!" cried both in a breath; "how glad we are! We have all along been begging mother to invite you here, to pass Christmas,—and you will, won't you?"

"Do you think it would be right to disappoint Mrs. Williams?" asked the old gentleman.

"She has had you two years already!" cried Augustus.

"But she expects me!" was the answer.

"Well, then," said Julian, laying his curly head on Uncle Thomas's shoulder, and gazing into his face

with his bright blue eyes; "can you not divide yourself, and let us have you half the time?"

The old man smiled; but he looked as if he was almost ready to cry all the while, so much did he feel all this love and affection from the young folks.

"Yes, yes!" said he, "I see it must be so, and I will yield. And now, as the thing is settled thus far, I'll tell you what arrangement I am willing to make. My days must be spent with Mrs. Williams, and the little scholars who board with her. They will expect it, because they are in the habit of seeing me at this merrymaking season; and I cannot find it in my heart to think, that when they ask 'Where is Uncle Thomas?' Mrs. W. should have to dash their cheerfulness by saying, 'Indeed, I cannot tell!' But I will agree to spend five evenings in the week with you, if you wish it."

"And why not *seven evenings?*" inquired Augustus.

"Because, my fine fellow, one of them will be the Sabbath, and another the evening before the Sabbath. I do not think that I am too much smitten with admiration for the character of the Puritans of New England; but there are two of their customs that

always interested and moved me,—the first of these is one that I sincerely wish were introduced amongst us, while I endeavour to practise the second."

"What are they?" asked little Anna, "what are they, Uncle? I always loved to read about the Puritans, for mother's great-grandfather was a pilgrim!"

"The first, my dear child, is Thanksgiving Day, which is a ceremony observed in a peculiar manner, once every year, in New England. Every family, on Thanksgiving Day, gives a dinner—"

"Gee up! gee up!" cried Charlie, who had just then obtained possession of Uncle Thomas's cane, and had mounted it, at the expense of exposing a pretty little, well-rounded knee, above the edge of his rumpled frock. "Gee up!" and he whirled his hand so suddenly round, to give *pony* a slap on the flank, caracoling at the same moment in the most spirited manner, that the stick became entangled with the dress, and down came the rider on the carpet, with a force that raised a bump upon his forehead.

For a little while all was, of course, crying, and petting, and maternal solicitude; but things soon became settled again. Little Charlie, after sobbing

awhile, went to sleep upon his mother's lap, and Uncle Thomas continued.

"As I was saying, every chief head of a family gives a Thanksgiving dinner to the grown and elder relatives of his race, and a supper to all his relations who are within reach of invitation. Indeed, they regard this supper so much as a right, that they sometimes come 'home' all the way from Europe, or South America, or California, or the East Indies, just in order to be at it. Not content with this, the said head of a family feels it his duty to make all his neighbours happy on that day, that there may be, if possible, no frowning faces in the neighbourhood to protest before heaven against this social enjoyment on the part of those whom Providence has blessed with wealth."

"And how does he make them happy?" inquired Anna, with a puzzled look.

"He gets as many good fat turkeys as he conscientiously thinks he ought to buy for the occasion, and after selecting such as he wants for his own merry-making, he sends the rest round to his poorer neighbours; and, as almost all the rich do so, it may be

supposed that no New England family of good repute, however humble, is without a fat turkey for the Thanksgiving dinner."

"Ha! ha!" laughed Julian, and his blue eyes danced with wit; "Yankee happiness consists, then, in eating fat turkeys."

"Youth," replied Uncle Thomas gaily, "somewhat under estimates the importance of the stomach; perhaps, because Youth is rarely called upon to provide food by personal labour. But the fat-turkey-eating is by no means the most heart-warming part of the ceremonies of Thanksgiving Day. In the evening, husband and wife, brother and sister, uncle and niece, and cousins to last recorded degree of consanguinity, wise or silly, rich or poor, then meet together on a footing of perfect equality, for one night at least. It is a beautiful sight, and after seeing many countries, and observing the manners of many people and individuals, I must say that my memory cherishes nothing more beautiful than a Yankee Thanksgiving Day eve."

"And are the good people of New England equally kind to their poor neighbours during the rest of the

year?" inquired Mrs. Manners, perhaps a little slyly; for, though a distant descendant of the pilgrims, she was a woman of fashion now.

"Alas, madam! let us leave experience to teach the young the darker side of human nature. I do not think that we weaken the foundations of good morals, by allowing our children to believe that all the seeming virtues we witness in the world are really rooted in the heart. Sometimes, as I am sorry to confess, the formal charity of a prescribed Christian feast is offered up in expiation for a whole year of unchristian neglect."

"But, Uncle," said Anna, "I do not understand all those big, long, hard words. I do not see what Thanksgiving Day, which comes in November, has to do with your telling us interesting stories at Christmas!"

"Thank you, my dear, for recalling an old man, who is very fond of talking, back to his subject. The second custom which I admire in the Yankees is, the habit of always giving Saturday evening to serious thought, in order to prepare their minds for the Sabbath; and, as I said before, I endeavour to practise

upon this custom. Now, then, you see why I can give you only five instead of seven evenings for conversation during the Christmas holidays."

"But you will fill up all those evenings, I hope, with stories about your travels, will you not?" asked Augustus; "And about the birds and beasts you have seen in foreign lands?" added Julian; "And about the little boys, and girls, and the cats, and dogs, and shells, and fishes, that you told about in the Christmas Blossoms last year and the year before?" inquired little Anna.

"Ah! my travelling days are over now, my dear children," said Uncle Thomas, with a sigh; "I must now leave others to wander over the world, and look at all the sights, and write their observations on Natural History: all that I can do is to sit and think —to hear what others say, like a little child! And, indeed, almost the only advantage that the aged have over the very young, consists in their being able to judge of what they hear by what they have seen. Their chief business is to reflect, and make their remarks upon what others see and say. So, I'll tell you what I propose to do. We will make our-

selves into a little reading society for the holidays; and after you are tired of the amusements and the sights of the day, we will all meet together, each evening at eight o'clock. We will then read some stories which I have picked up during the year, and have laid aside, because I thought them peculiarly adapted to children. What say you to my plan?"

"But will you not tell us some stories of your own, too?"

"Perhaps so. Each of you shall bring me one or two pictures out of the portfolio, and if I can not find stories in print to match them, why I must even tax my memory, and tell some of my own. I seldom can look at a picture without a story to fit it popping right into my head."

"And must we all sit still and listen, without saying anything when the big words puzzle us, or when we want to know more about what you read, than the people who write books are willing to tell children?" asked Anna, with a pout.

"No, indeed!" said Uncle Thomas; "you shall interrupt whenever you please, but it must be at the end of a sentence. And the more questions you ask the better, for as somebody will surely publish all we

read and all we say, the more questions and difficulties you ask me to explain, the better other little folks will understand us."

Anna clapped her hands, the boys looked delighted, and Uncle Thomas got ready to go; for he said he had an engagement that must hurry him away: but he requested them to be all ready and waiting for the first meeting of the reading club, on Christmas evening.

As Mrs. Manners rose to take leave of the old gentleman, she had to wake poor little Charlie, and he, as he stood half asleep by her side, rubbing his eyes with the back of his hand, muttered whiningly, "Uncle Thomas, don't go yet; I want to hear you talk." Uncle Thomas smiled, as he replied, "I will come five times next week, my child, and will give you a sound nap each time, no doubt, but now a friend is waiting for me, and it is almost tea-time."

Augustus and Julian waited upon him to the door, and watched him till he turned the corner of the street; then Julian cried out, clapping his hands the while, "Won't we have jolly holidays this time!" "I reckon we will," said Augustus, as he closed the door.

THE FIRST EVENING.

WELL; Christmas Day came at last. The children had all enjoyed their morning presents. Charlie was made sick by indulging too much in the contents of his suspended stocking, and was put to bed before tea. Anna had been to church with her mother before dinner, and had a delightful little romp with some little girls in the nursery after dinner, while the boys, with some half dozen of their acquaintances, were snow-balling each other to their hearts' content in the garden. After this they all put themselves in order for tea, and finished their repast.

"Now then, for Uncle Thomas and the reading society!" cried Julian, as the mother and her children, with the exception of the youngest, were collected in the parlour. Augustus went into the library, and presently reappeared with a huge portfolio of engrav-

ings, left by his deceased father, who had been very fond of the fine arts. This he laid upon the centre-table, and all the company drew their chairs around it, leaving the great damask-cushioned arm-chair for the old gentleman.

They were not kept waiting many minutes. The door-bell rang a merry peal, and, presently, in walked Uncle Thomas with a bundle of little books under his arm.

"Now," said he, as soon as he had deposited the books on the table, and found himself comfortably seated, "let us to business at once."

"Who is to be president?" inquired Augustus.

"A truce to politics!" exclaimed Uncle Thomas; "we will try if five American republican citizens can not for once meet in a society without quarrelling about office, and holding an election! No! we will have neither officers nor offices here; but will all be equal. Suppose we come to order by singing a pretty little song, written by a man away over on the other side of the sea, about morning, and spring, and their promise, and the value of time. It is not the spring-time of year, or the morning of the day with us just

now, but it is, *with you*, the morning and spring-time of life, and the song will apply to our whole lives as well as to the seasons." He then sang, in a voice that had once been clear as a silver bell, but now sounded more like a brass one, cracked by time, the following very pretty lines.

THE MOTHER'S LESSON.

BY CHARLES DOYNE SILLERY.

"Come, let us to our task repair—
Improve another day;
The flowers are fresh—the morn is fair;
And all is young and gay!

"Behold the bee, from flower to plant,
Her way industrious winging!
Behold the little insect ant—
The lark at heaven's gate singing!

"The dancing rills, with flocks between—
The ever-varying skies—

Come, learn from all the busy scene,
My children, to be wise!

"The healthful morn, with roses crowned,
To life hath roused the whole;
There's sunshine in the world around,—
And sunshine in the soul!

"When wealth by labour's once attained,
No matter what it cost:
One hour well spent—that hour is gained—
One idle hour is lost.

"Were all those fields that deck the scene
On which the sun shines down;
Were all these woods of waving green,
And all yon hills your own;

"They could not yield so pure a joy,
In after years you'll find,
As those we seek, my girl and boy,—
The treasures of the mind.

"One lesson from the book of Truth—
One leaf from Wisdom's page,—
Will dignify the days of youth,
And consecrate old age!

"No wealth into this world we brought,
And none can take away:
The blind in mind, the poor in thought—
How blind!—how poor are they!

"No joy o'er darkness hath control;—
For ignorance is sin;—
No sorrow can disturb the soul,
When all is light within.

"*There*, dwells a balm for every grief—
A bliss for every hour—
A tear, to give the heart relief—
A thought for every flower—

"A prayer for every blessed thought
That bears the soul abroad—
A joy for every hallowed spot—
A love for man and God!

"Oh! happy are the hearts, whose love
With wisdom still increase;
For all her ways most pleasant prove,
And all her paths are peace!

"Come, then, dear children! let's improve
The talents God has given;

And grow in wisdom, grace, and love,
Pure spirits meet for heaven!"

The song being concluded, the old gentleman requested Augustus, as the eldest, to choose from the portfolio a picture, to be the first subject of a story for the evening. Augustus did as he was bid, and soon selected one that was connected with their afternoon amusement. Our readers may see it in the very pretty vignette that appears on the title-page of this year's Christmas Blossoms. It shows us some merry urchins sliding down a hill of snow upon their little sleds; and in high glee they appear to be.

"There!" said the lad, "I do not believe that even Uncle Thomas can find a story about riding on a sled. People that write books do not often trouble themselves about the sports of children."

"Do not be too certain," replied the old gentleman; "though I may not be able to find a tale that treats of sleds and nothing else, I think I can produce one that says something about them." And then he fumbled about among his books for a long while. At last he seized on a pretty little volume, bound in

beautiful embossed red muslin, and held it up in triumph. "Augustus," said he, "must read aloud this story himself, as a proper punishment for his unbelief." So poor Augustus, after much persuasion, commenced reading the following narrative.

CHILDREN SPORTS IN SWITZERLAND.

BY A SWISS LADY.

"I WISH, my dear Mademoiselle, you would tell me how children contrive to amuse themselves in Switzerland during the winter. The weather, you say, is so cold, and there is so much snow, that they must surely be very dull."

"They certainly would be dull," I replied, "if, as you fancy, they remained always at home; but such is not the case. They are, from their birth, accustomed to the weather, and, consequently, do not feel its severity as you would. Winter, far from being to

them a tedious season, is one of great amusement, and always looked forward to with pleasure. Their great delight is in skating on the ice, or sliding on the snow. I have seldom seen more happy faces together than those of the children of a village assembled at the top of a mount of about a quarter of a mile in its descent. You can picture to yourself such a place, behind an old castle, which, by the way, is said to have existed in the days of Julius Cæsar. It is a beautiful spot, and I have often spent delightful hours there. The noble avenue of horse-chestnut trees; the old castle, with its tottering towers; the lovely Reuse rolling its clear waters, almost at the foot of the little hill, beyond the numberless villages; and, in the distance, the magnificent Alps!

"Fancy, then, twenty or thirty boys and girls together at the top of the mount. The ground is covered by at least two feet of snow, frozen and hard. Each of the candidates for pleasure has a little chair formed of three planks, two standing parallel, and the third across the others; it is not more than three quarters of a foot in height, and of just sufficient breadth to allow one person to sit on it. At the

bottom of the slides of the *glisse*, as it is commonly called, there is a band of iron, such as you have seen in sledges or skates. A kind of path has been beaten in the snow, and now you sit down on your glisse; where the ground begins to incline, you stretch your legs that they may not impede your way, holding a cord in your hand which is tied to the glisse, and answers the purpose of reins; a kind friend gives you a push, and away you go, at the rate of fifteen miles an hour."

Here the reading was interrupted by Julian, with the exclamation, "Oh, glorious! A hill to slide on a quarter of a mile long! How I should like to go to Switzerland with my little sled! But I suppose mother will not let me do that till I have done going to school."

"Silly boy!" said Augustus, "to talk of going over the ocean, at an expense, maybe, of more than two hundred dollars, just to ride on a sled down hill."

"Say, rather, *two thousand*, Augustus," remarked the mother; "your notions of money are about as

silly as your brother's ideas of distance;—but go on with your story."

Uncle Thomas smiled, and the reading proceeded.

"The more expert among those who follow overtakes you, as you slide down the hill; with one foot he pushes you aside, and sends you rolling in the snow, while he pursues his course, laughing and singing, till one still more expert than he is sends him on the same errand. Others race together; and you may conceive the joy of the winner. The fresh, pure, cold air gives to all a ruddy look of health; while their exertions keep the cold away, and you often hear them exclaim, 'How hot it is!'"

Here Anna cried out, "La, me! Too hot in the cold winter, and sliding on the snow! I can hardly believe that."

"Your brothers will tell you," said Uncle Thomas, "that they often perspire most profusely when skating briskly, even in the coldest weather. I was once very near losing my life, when a boy, by skating to a long distance up one of our rivers, far from any

house, on a very cold and windy day. On my way up, I had the wind in my favour, and felt very uncomfortably warm with the exercise; but when, on my return, I had to face the keen northwest gale that was blowing at the time, the wind carried off my animal heat so rapidly, that I became very sleepy. It required all my energy and obstinacy of will, which were then somewhat remarkable, to prevent me from lying down exhausted with drowsiness. Had I done so, ten minutes would have placed me beyond the hope of telling any more stories."

"Why, is it possible that a little wind can make such a difference?" asked Augustus, with much surprise.

"Yes, indeed;" replied the old gentleman: "In still air, a man will safely bear a degree of cold that would kill him very soon if a breeze were to arise. I once knew the weather to become suddenly cold enough, in the northwest of Pennsylvania, to split many forest trees by freezing the sap in their limbs and trunks. They burst with a sound as loud as the crack of a rifle. But, fortunately, in such extreme weather, there is seldom wind enough to wave the

smoke from the log-cabin chimney, and it rises like a great white column, far into the upper air. Were it not for this stillness, no living thing could have escaped death from the frost; and the unfortunate driver of the mail stage to Meadville gave unhappy evidence of this fact, upon that most bitter night. The air indeed was still, but his duty compelled him to move rapidly through it, and he might as well have been subjected to a breeze, blowing as rapidly as his horses travelled. On one part of his route, he had to make a stage of many miles, through what was then a wilderness, without a house. When the poor fellow at last arrived at an inn, the horses dashed up to the door, covered with hoar-frost and icicles, and stopped at the accustomed post. 'Why don't you get down, you fool?' said the hostler, as he commenced unfastening the horses from the coach. 'Why don't you get down and help out your passengers?' he repeated, when he found no reply. Still there was no answer. 'The lazy fellow is asleep,' he remarked, as those inside undid the curtain to let themselves out; and forthwith, he mounted the box to arouse him. The man was stone dead, with the

reins in his hands!—He had probably been frozen for more than an hour; and the instinct of the animals alone saved the lives of the passengers. Yet, I shall surprise you still more when I tell you that I have slept comfortably all night,—no, not comfortably, but uncomfortably warm,—wrapped up in my plaid cloak, in a cave hollowed out from the side of a deep snow-drift, when the weather was very nearly as cold as on that memorable occasion. In fact, it was colder than I have known it to be in Philadelphia at any time during my life. If a man bury himself in deep, dry snow, leaving only a little passage to the surface for a breathing-hole, he may remain perfectly free from danger in the coldest weather, if he leave snow enough between his body and the ground to give the moisture created by his animal heat a good drainage, so that he may not be wet. Whole flocks of sheep have been buried by heavy snow-storms, and yet have been found alive after many days, though nearly starved to death. Their breathing always keeps open a small passage to the outer air."

"How wonderful!" said Augustus: "How comes

it, then, that so many travellers perish in snow-storms?"

Uncle Thomas replied: "It is not always possible to find a drift deep enough for a cave; and even if it were so, the next blast of the tempest, after it has been completed, may scatter it, and lay bare the unhappy digger. But most travellers are ignorant of the fact that life may be thus preserved, or, if they have heard of it, they disbelieve it. Many a man dies for want of a very little knowledge of physiology and natural philosophy;—many more, because they do not know how to apply the knowledge they possess.—But if I get into one of my talkative fits, we shall not get through the story of the evening. Go on!"

And the reading was recommenced.

"But there is no rose without thorns, nor any pleasure without its trouble; so you find, when you are at the bottom of the hill, that you must walk up again, and drag your *glisse* after you; the snow is slippery, and you often make a *faux pas*, which is instantly followed by the laughter of all the little

band. It is a healthy exercise, and not dangerous, the snow seldom being hard enough to hurt you when you fall in it. The place I have described is the favourite spot of the children of the small town of Boudry, in the canton of Neuchatel. Boudry is not more than two miles from the foot of the Jura. In summer, all the children flock to its woods to gather strawberries and raspberries, which grow wild there in luxuriant profusion.

"I remember to have seen there one of the prettiest *fêtes* you can well imagine. It is now many years ago. It had been settled, two months before the end of the year, that a great procession should take place on New Year's day, which should exhibit the different professions or trades exercised by the people. The vintage had been abundant that year, and, therefore, they elected Bacchus for the divinity of the *fête*. But now for the plan of the show. There was to be a car of at least a quarter of a mile in length. This car was to be ornamented with evergreens,—not merely ornamented, but entirely covered, so that it might appear a moving garden. The whole length of the car was divided into fifteen divisions, in each

of which an arbour of evergreens was erected, so that these formed separate rooms all of an equal size, except the middle one, which was much larger and much more ornamented than the others.

"Now, I am sure you will not think that too much time was taken to arrange the whole of this procession. It was pleasant to see with what care the children of the neighbouring villages nursed the few flowers which an uncommonly mild winter had spared, in order that they might have a bouquet on the day of the much-wished-for *fête*, or, if they had more than they wanted, to give them to adorn the car;—how those who were fortunate enough to possess a monthly rose-tree nursed it: the best place near the stove was for the beautiful and delicate tree. And the dresses, what fuss there was about them! But the great anxiety of all was on account of the weather; you may be sure the almanacs were consulted every day. The first question asked was, 'Do you think this fine weather will last? Oh, if the New Year would but come in with such a day as this! The Alps look very clear and distinct, and

you know that's a sure sign that the weather is fixed for fine,' &c., &c.

"At last the time approached,—it was already Christmas Day. The evergreens were seen pouring in from the Jura, where men had been sent to cut them; the car was put into a long flat field just outside the town, and the work advanced; all the ribands that could be gathered were collected. Now, there were but a few days remaining, and the weather was so good as to be just what one could have wished. The dresses were also ready; all went on beautifully till the last day, when, to the horror of all, young and old, the atmosphere presented a dense mass of heavy clouds, which, in a very short time, poured their contents in the shape of snow, in torrents upon the devoted village. Now, adieu to to-morrow's *fête*. O dear! O dear! if the weather had but continued fine for a few days longer, only two days more, after that it might have snowed for ever without any one caring a fig about the matter! Then, the barometer was consulted every minute; shocking to tell, the barometer instead of ascending went lower and lower.

"However, towards three o'clock in the afternoon, a slight change was perceptible, not only in the atmosphere, but in the barometer, which began to ascend; and, though the snow continued to pour in, yet it was a consolation that it was a little abated, and hope began to revive. When it began to snow, large sheets had been spread over the car; luckily the flowers had been kept to the last, and were only to be arranged early in the morning.

"Towards evening the snow ceased to fall, the wind swept the clouds rapidly away, and just before nightfall, a patch of blue sky had been seen; and, before nine o'clock came, the children had the satisfaction to see the sky studded with innumerable stars. A sharp frost had set in, and the wind still continued due west, and, therefore, it would not snow on the morrow. How delightful! With acclamations of delight, these happy creatures went to bed.

"At last, the day appeared; and a glorious day it was!—not a cloud to be seen, the air fresh, and the sun rising in tranquil majesty behind the Alps, whose tops were tinged with the rays of the rising sun, which gave them the hues of the rainbow; then the

sun, like a globe of fire, showed itself entire, and spread its glorious rays all over the country. I do not remember ever having seen anything so beautiful. The snow during the night had been frozen so hard, that you might fancy yourselves walking upon the purest marble.

"The last finish had been given to the car, everything necessary had been put in it; and now you might see farmers, with all their oxen, arriving from every quarter (for the car was to be dragged by these animals); and how many pair do you think were employed on this occasion? No less than two hundred and fifty!—Yes, you may well be surprised, but such was the number.

"All the surrounding villages had been informed of what was going on, and were anxious to see it. The town was completely crammed, and there were not windows sufficient to admit the eager heads that were languishing to get a peep. I know I was almost suffocated by the pressure and the squeezing. At last we saw a string of oxen coming up the town. I stretched my neck to see what came after, and I could see nothing but oxen and their drivers: the

latter were clothed in their best, each with an artificial rose in his coat, and ribands of different colours, with long floating ends, tied to his right arm; a broad-brimmed straw hat, also garnished with ribands and flowers, completed his dress. The oxen had not been forgotten, and flowers and ribands also ornamented their heads.

"I never remember being so out of patience as I was then,—oxen after oxen passed with their slow, measured step. Oh, thought I, if I could but infuse a little spirit into those dull animals! never remembering that, if they had gone at the smart trot I wished, in all probability they would have upset all the preparations. It was nearly half an hour, if not more, before the car appeared; at last we were rewarded for our patience. The first arbour represented a printing-press, at which the printers were hard at work, though we could see a sly smile on the lips of the young workmen. A grown-up person was in every arbour, to prevent the children from getting into mischief. We also heard music at a distance; this proceeded from the temple of the god: but I must describe each in its turn. In the next arbour

we saw a set of tailors working hard and laughing, exhibiting coats, &c. I now was fully satisfied that the oxen went at a wise pace: had they gone quickly, the spectators would not have seen half the sight. Then came a milliner's shop: what pretty bonnets and caps were exhibited there!—Then, a dress-maker's:—An inn, with all the bustle that there is generally in such a place:—Now, a shop of artificial flowers sold by little fairies, who looked more lovely than their flowers. After these came shoemakers. At last we obtained a full view of the central arbour:—It was spacious, and beautifully set out,—not gaudy, though there was enough to make it so, if it had not been arranged with good taste. On a heap of moss in the middle of the arbour, a fine new barrel was laid, and one of the prettiest children I have ever seen was sitting on it, holding a silver cup in one hand, and a thyrsus in the other."

"Stop there!" shouted little Anna; "I want to know what a thyrsus is."

"Let Augustus answer," said Uncle Thomas; "I suspect he knows a good deal about the heathen gods

and goddesses, from hearing the Latin class recite at school."

"It means," replied the youth, "a kind of rod or wand, that Bacchus, the god of the grape, used to carry in his hand. It was all twisted round with ivy and grape-vine; but do let me go on with the story!"—and again he began reading.

"His head was crowned by a chaplet of roses and ivy. You never saw a happier face than that child's. A band was stationed at the back of the arbour; and in front, a dozen children, holding each other by the hand, formed a choir. We had heard the music at a distance, and, therefore, were not sorry when the band stopped, to allow the children to sing. In fancy, I still hear those sweet and innocent voices. The song was very pretty, but I do not remember the words now; they were in praise of Spring, and set to a very beautiful Swiss air. The burden of the song is the only thing I recollect of it; it was this:

"'*Violet! violet!*
Reviens dans nos hameaux!
Violet! violet!
Return again to our villages.'

"Next came a glover; you know that the best gloves we wear now come from Fleurier, a village of Switzerland. Then, came a weaver; and, if he had worked hard, the noise of his loom would not have been a very good accompaniment to the music. Next, came the carpenter; some little girls were employed in gathering some shavings, &c. After, came a basket-maker; and the baskets were all beautiful. The last two arbours contained a baker and a butcher. Now, do you not think that the oxen, though there were so many of them, had something to do to drag all this number of persons and things?

"When the car had passed our town, it was taken to two other small villages near; and at six o'clock the oxen were unyoked, and all the children and their parents flocked to the Hôtel de Ville, where all sorts of refreshments had been prepared. The evening ended in a ball. Everything had gone off in the most delightful manner! The weather had been fine; the children good; and I never heard, afterwards, any one complain of anything that happened on that day; there were no 'ifs' or 'buts'—everybody was satisfied.

"You see, my dear, that the children of Switzerland are not without their amusements in winter, and that the cold weather is no interrupter of pleasure. God has so wisely ordered all things, that there is not a country which does not possess advantages to counterbalance its disadvantages; and it is seldom that you will see any human being prefer another country to his own; and who is not convinced that his native land is by far superior to every other?

"And now, good night, my dearest; and never forget to thank God in your prayers, for the many blessings which, I am sure, you value doubly, because of the power you possess of sharing them with others."

Just as the reading of this story was completed, there was heard some bustle in the room overhead; which was the nursery; and the rapid treading of a foot across the floor, told that the child's nurse was busy about something. Mrs. Manners turned slightly pale, for she was an exceedingly anxious mother. She apologized for leaving the room for a moment,

and went out, forgetting in her haste to shut the parlour door.

No sooner was the door opened than all the children smiled at the noise they heard. It seemed that such sounds were by no means unusual. "Mamma! Mamma! I want Mamma! Go away, Betty! I don't want you, I want Mamma!" Such were the cries that came sweeping down the staircase, as Mrs. Manners was heard briskly ascending; and, in a few minutes, the lady reappeared with Charlie in her arms,—his long, white night-gown covering his feet, and his whole body wrapped up in a large, doubled Cashmere shawl, between the parted folds of which his curly head made its appearance, and his little blue eyes twinkled like stars through the fine mist of the horizon on a summer night. He could still hardly keep them open.

"Excuse me, but we make no stranger of you, Uncle Thomas; this little fellow is completely roused, and I could not pacify him at all, without bringing him down; for, the little urchin remembered, in waking, that you were to be here to-night!"

"Well, well; bring him to me," said the good old

man, as he took the bundle from the mother's arms, and set it gently on his knee:—"And what does little Charlie want, down stairs, at this time of night?"

"I want Uncle Thomas to tell me a story. They put me to bed before tea, and then I guess they all heard a story but me, and I want to hear a story, too!" said the little man, with a pout.

"I am fearful," remarked the mother, "that Charlie will mar our arrangements; for he is wonderfully fond of listening to strangers, for one so very young; he seems to like to hear everything, whether he understands it or not."

"Never fear," replied Uncle Thomas, "I have no doubt I can manage him very well, without disappointing him." And, giving the little fellow a kiss, he added, "Yes; Charlie *shall* have a story, too; and then he will be a good boy, and go to bed, I know. I'll leave out or change all the big words for him as I go along, so that he can understand it; for very few people that are grown up know how to talk to very little children."

Then the old gentleman fumbled about among his

books for a minute or two, and presently said he, "I've found one. It tells all about two little girls in England, who went to take a walk in the woods. They were from town, and knew nothing about the country. It shows how easily little children may be terribly frightened at the commonest sights and sounds, if they do not try to learn the cause of everything they see and hear. Whenever they meet with anything they do not understand, they ought always to ask somebody much older than themselves to explain it, and not depend on what they are told by other little boys and girls, who seldom know much more than they do themselves, and even when they do know, are often so mischievous as to tell them wrong, just for sport. But let me read the story. It was written by a very kind-hearted lady in England, who is very fond of children, but she writes chiefly for young folks as old as Augustus and Julian; so, I will not read it to Charlie exactly as it is printed." And Uncle Thomas began.

HOW A JEST WAS NO JOKE.

"When I was a little child of five or six years old, I and my sister, rather older than myself, were taken by our father to spend a summer's day in Needwood Forest."

Here Uncle Thomas remarked that forests in England were very small affairs compared with forests in America, and that children might wander in them without much danger of being lost;—that they were more like what we call groves, and the groves are often what we call "clumps." Then he went on with his reading.

"We were little wild things, as brown and as hardy as gipsies, and many a long, happy day we had spent under the forest trees, dining in woodmen's cottages, or if none were at hand, by the side of a little running stream in some old woodland hollow.

"Towards noon, on one of these happy days, as we

were tired with a long morning's ramble, we were left to recover from our fatigue under the spreading shade of a great big tree, like fairies in a fairy-tale—looking as little, by the side of this giant of the forest, and being almost lost among its curled and twisted roots, which were heaved up, old and rugged, and covered with moss, and wreathed together like a nest of angry snakes which had been turned to stone, ages and ages before. Around us lay a small opening of forest, covered with short green grass, upon which the sunshine fell with such soft light as to give it the colour of clear emerald; this was enclosed by thickets of black holly, which, in contrast with the light ground in front, looked still more deeply dark: under and among these, grew the greenwood laurel with its clusters of poisonous-looking berries, and whole beds of the fair, white stellaria, shining like stars (whence its name; for *stella* is the Latin for star) among its grass-like leaves of tender green. In other spots grew clusters of the dark, gloomy enchanter's night-shade, a very poisonous plant, about which they tell a great many foolish witch-stories; and the singular

and rare four-leaved Herb-Paris, bearing a flower that looks like a berry."

Here Julian inquired whether we have these plants in America; and Uncle Thomas said that they were brought here, and cultivated by the naturalists and gardeners as curiosities. He told the children that some of the worst weeds that now do so much injury to our farms, were formerly brought from England and other foreign countries, and reared with great care as green-house plants. He told them that the weed with beautiful yellow flowers growing in a spike, but the whole plant having a very bad smell—the plant that is commonly called the *rancid weed*, which covers whole acres of ground, along the fences and roadsides in Pennsylvania—was one of these. Then he continued his story.

"We felt half-pleased and half-afraid in being left alone in so wild a spot. We heard the crow of the distant pheasant, the coo-coo of the wood-pigeon, and the laugh-like cry of the wood-pecker; and these, though familiar to us, seemed strangely to add to the

solitariness of the scene. And yet it was very delightful. We talked cheerfully of everything around us; watched the hare run past, or from thicket to thicket; and saw the starling creep up the old trees, and the little birds fly in and out from their woody screens, with more than common interest. But at length, after long watching and long observation, we remarked to each other a strange, unceasing, low sound, which we could not comprehend; it seemed to keep up a perpetual chirr-chirr-r-r-ing, somewhere near us, but we could not tell exactly where. At times, it appeared just beside us; and then, half the glade's distance off; now it was high, now low, now on this side, now on that—the strangest we had ever heard. We did not know what to make of it.

"In the midst of our wonderment, up came a stout forest-boy, of twelve years, or thereabouts. He was a brown and wild-looking creature, looking as if he belonged to the woods. He was dressed in a suit of leather, had a belt round his waist in which he carried his wood-knife, and on his back was a bundle of fagots. As he came up he seemed amazed to find two children, like the Babes in the Wood, seated

hand in hand at the foot of an old tree, and made a pause to look at us. We were not frightened at his strange appearance; for we had seen such before, bringing wood for the kitchen fire; so, hailing him as a friend, we asked what was that strange low voice which we heard somewhere thereabout.

"The boy looked at us for half a moment with a sort of grin; and then, with a sudden look of fear, half bending his body and speaking in a low but distinct whisper — 'It's my Lord Vernon's blood-hounds,' said he; 'they are out a-hunting, and yon sounds are the chains which they drag after them!" and so saying he dashed off like a wild stag.

"What a horror now fell upon us! The wood seemed to us like an enchanted forest: all at once the trees appeared to swell out to the most monstrous size; every twisted root looked like a writhing snake, and every old, wreathed, hanging branch, a serpent ready to devour us. The holly thickets seemed full of deeper blackness, which, like a dreadful dream, appeared growing upon our imagination till it was too horrible to be borne. We felt as if hemmed in by a mighty wilderness of gloom, that cut us off from our

kindred: and still, the chirr-r-chirr-r of the terrible hounds, and their dragging chains, sounded through the dreadful silence, seeming to our affrighted senses to come nearer and nearer, and well-nigh drove us distracted. What indeed would have become of us, I know not, had we been left to ourselves and our terrors; but our cry of 'Father! father!' speedily brought him to our aid, and the enchantment fled with his presence. The laugh with which he heard our story drove away all the terror of it. 'It is the grasshopper and nothing more,' said he, 'which has caused all this foolish alarm;' and then listening for a moment, he traced it by its sound among the short, dry, sunny grass, and then held it in his hand before us. 'And yet he was a wicked boy,' continued our father, 'who told a falsehood to frighten you thus. But come, now you shall go to your dinner;' and so saying, and taking one by each hand, he led us from the enchanted glade to a woodman's cottage in the next dell."

When Uncle Thomas had finished this story, he looked at Charlie to see how he liked it; for the little

fellow had not said one word, but lay with his head on the old man's shoulder, looking up into his face with his great big blue eyes all the time; and now, when he saw the kind smile that was bent upon him, his ruby lips parted, and he looked half timid and half anxious, as he whispered gently, "Tell me another!"

"No, no, my child," exclaimed Mrs. Manners; "it is high time for you to be abed and asleep."

"I don't want to go to bed!" returned Charlie, with a quivering lip; "I was sick, and they put me to bed before supper, and I've been waiting for more than three weeks to hear Uncle Thomas tell a story, and I don't want to go to bed; so I don't."

"Oh! but, my darling," said Uncle Thomas, "I am tired of story-telling; so suppose we finish the evening with a pretty little song!"

Charlie's face brightened, and his head nestled more closely to Uncle Thomas's bosom, as the old gentleman proceeded to sing, or rather hum, in a kind of recitative tone, that owed all its music to the heart rather than the voice, the following lines.

THE LITTLE LAMB.

BY A LITTLE CHILD.

"LITTLE lamb, little lamb,
Will you leave your old dam,
To play all the day by my nursery fire?
You shall have bread and milk,
And a cushion of silk,
And a cradle as soft as a lamb can desire."

"No, no, little child,
I had rather run wild,
And play all the day by the side of my dam:
We love one another,
Like you and your mother,
And *she'd* cry all the day for the loss of *her* lamb."

As the singing went on, Charlie's head grew heavier and heavier, and his gentle breathing slower and slower, and by the time it was finished, Uncle Thomas had nothing in his lap but a queer-looking

bundle wrapped up in a Cashmere shawl, that might as well have been a clothes-bag with a shirt-tail hanging out of its mouth, for any sign that it gave of any life within it. Mrs. Manners rang the bell, the child's nurse carried the bundle up stairs, and after partaking of a nice little supper that had been prepared in the dining-room, the company broke up for the evening in high glee, and higher hopes for the morrow.

THE SECOND EVENING.

On the next evening, the same little group of joyous faces were gathered in Mrs. Manners's parlour; but this time Charles was present also, for he had entirely recovered from the effects of the sweet-cake and candy. He was too young to take a part in the evening's amusements, but his mother had not the heart to send him to bed till he had seen Uncle Thomas, he pled so hard for the privilege. How to indulge him without allowing his noisy sportfulness to interrupt the reading, she knew not, and her face wore a queer, puzzled expression, as he entered the room: and Uncle Thomas saw what sailors call "the lay-of-the-land" in a moment. He looked first at the child and then at the mother, with a shrewd smile, that seemed to say, "Leave all that to me, and I will arrange it," and he took his seat.

Charlie immediately commenced climbing his knee;

so he lifted him to his lap, gave him a kiss, and said:

"Charlie, my lad, I am going to try a philosophical experiment on *you*."

CHARLIE.—"Is it a pretty story?"

UNCLE THOMAS.—"Yes, you shall hear a pretty story, if you will do as I want you to do, and will keep awake to hear a song; but if you go to sleep while we are singing it, you must kiss me and go to bed when we begin to read, every night; for you are almost too young yet to sit up all the evening."

CHARLIE.—"Oh, no! I can keep awake well enough, and I'll be right still and good, if you'll only let me stay."

UNCLE THOMAS.—"Well, well! we'll see."

The old gentleman told Charlie to bring his little chair, and he set it under the shadow of the table, near his mother's feet: and he placed the fire-screen stand about three feet from him, so that the screen stood in the full light of the lamp. "Now get me a wafer," said he: and Julian ran quickly and brought one from the study. Uncle Thomas moistened the wafer, and stuck it exactly in the middle of the shield

of the screen. "Now, Charlie," said he, "sit down in this chair; put your little hands before you, and look at that red wafer, without once turning your head or looking away from it, or saying one word till I have done singing; and, if you can keep awake so long, I'll agree to tell you one of the prettiest stories you ever heard in your life."

Mrs. Manners hardly knew what to make of all this, and the children could hardly help laughing aloud; but little Charlie did as he was bid, saying, "Julia and Annie may laugh if they will; but I *can sit still*, and I *can* keep awake:" and he began looking at the red wafer with all his might, to keep himself from getting drowsy; while Uncle Thomas took his place at the table, with his books before him, and chaunted, in a low, soft voice, this little ditty.

A SONG OF HOME.

We once had a home, where the sweet roses grew,
Where clouds never gathered, nor stormy winds blew,
Where blithe birds of summer in safety could sing,
And fold, with the nightfall, their soft, brooding wing.

Oh, bright was that home when the spring-time returned!
But brighter than all when the evening fire burned;
When snow fell around us, and comfort within,
Told the time when the pleasures of winter begin.

When the laugh, and the jest, and the innocent song,
Made music of happiness all the day long;
While the warm sunny welcome of morning and night,
Turned duty to pastime, and love to delight.

Yes, those are the days that we weep as we sing,
That no spring-time returning, nor summer can bring;
When our father came home with a smile on his brow,
And the kindest of mothers—Ah! where are they now?

Cold, cold is the hearth where our evening fire burned!
With sorrowful hearts from that scene have we turned;
For father and mother are peacefully laid
Where the elm and the yew-tree are blending their shade.

And now when we call them, they hear us no more;
Though we kneel on their graves, and their pity implore.
Unheeded we wander, and friendless we roam,
To tell to the stranger we once had a home.

When the ditty was finished, there was a dead silence in the room for some moments; a tear trem-

bled in the mother's eyes; the boys looked very serious; and little Annie, though she scarcely knew why, pressed her mother's hand, and gazed sorrowfully in her face. Uncle Thomas had touched a tender chord; for it was only four years since they, too, had seen a "father come home, with a smile on his brow:" and they thought, perhaps, how cold and deep the snow now lay upon his tomb.

Do not think that Uncle Thomas was wrong in acting thus. The memory of those we love, when we feel that they deserved our love, ceases to be a grief, when the first days of bitterness are past, and then it returns upon us as a solemn pleasure. Surely, when we meet to enjoy ourselves rationally and calmly, at the most holy of holidays,—when all our living loves are gathered around us,—we should not be painfully sad, in recalling the memory of the departed that were dear to us, whose spirits, it is a happiness to think, may be hovering near us still.

So perfect was the pause after the conclusion of the song, that no one thought of Charlie, till suddenly, Mrs. Manners started from her chair, exclaiming, "Why, what can be the matter with my little

baby-boy!—Bless me!" she added, as she saw his little head lying easily on his left shoulder, "the dear little creature is asleep, as sound as a top." Uncle Thomas smiled,—the bell rung,—the maid entered, and Charlie was soon laid at his ease in the little trundle-bed that ran under his mother's in the day-time.

"Now, Master Julian," said the old man, "it is your turn to ransack the portfolio:—Choose an engraving, and set us going for the evening."

Julian soon made his selection. "Here, Uncle," said he, "I have found a queer picture of a country cottage among the trees. Such a pretty cottage! How I should like to live in it! And here are a couple of little boys very busy about something. What are they doing? One of them is down on his knees, looking into what seems to be a box, sunk in the ground, with the edge out. He is fixing something like sticks inside of it, and the other one is squatting close by, with the lid of the box between his knees. Then there is a birdcage close by his side. I wonder what they are about."

"Setting a bird-trap, I presume," replied Uncle Thomas; "bring it here, and let me see it."

Augustus leaned over his shoulder, to look at the picture, and exclaimed, "Why, what kind of a roof is that? It is neither of shingles, nor slate, nor copper, nor tin. How very rough! It seems like a load of hay tumbled upon the top of the house. What is it made of?"

"That," said Uncle Thomas, "is a thatched roof. It is a very common kind of a roof in England, where shingles are scarce and dear; and though they have the best slate in the world, it is too costly for the labouring people in a country where the poor are very poor. As for copper and tin, you know that they are dearer still; so, most of the cottagers thatch their houses with straw."

"With straw!" cried Julian, with astonishment. "Why, how do they keep the rain from soaking through, and wetting the carpets, and spoiling the furniture?"

"My dear child, did you never observe what a comfortable dry nest a little field-mouse makes for itself and its young ones in the middle of a stack of hay?" asked Uncle Thomas. "Then, as to carpets, the common people are often too poor to have any,

unless it be a piece made of rags, to lay by the side of their beds, to keep them from catching cold when they take off their stockings at night. They sprinkle white sand on their floors, and brush it into the form of vines and flowers, so that it looks as neat and much more cleanly than any woollen carpet, though it takes a great deal of trouble to keep it in order; for it has to be brushed away and renewed every morning, if the cottager wishes to be very prim and tidy. Then, again; these people have no furniture that a little wet would spoil;—only a few well-scoured white tables, a few rude chairs, a big wooden settee, a dough-trough and two or three spinning-wheels, down stairs, and some cot-bedsteads in the loft. A little rain would not be very likely to hurt them much. But, to tell you the truth, these thatched roofs are really very dry. The straw is laid on very carefully in sheaves, with butts all turned one way, and the other ends curiously woven together; so that the rain trickles down to the eaves, between the outside straws, and rarely or never finds its way through the roof, while the thatch is in good order; and it will continue so for many years, if not abused. Thatch

makes a covering for houses that is warm in winter and cool in summer; we sometimes see it used, even in this country, for stables and cow-houses and corn-cribs, and I am not quite sure that, in this respect, our animals are not sometimes made much more comfortable than ourselves; for, though the water cannot go through the thatch when it rains, the air can, in dry weather; and our tight roofs shut in a great deal of foul air, and, if other means of ventilation be not provided, they often make our country houses very unhealthy. In England, where every light of glass is taxed, poor people can hardly afford to have windows at all; and when they do allow themselves such a luxury, the frames are always very small; so you perceive that thatched roofs may be a very great blessing to the poor."

"Well, now," said little Anna, "I can hardly understand how straw can keep out rain."

"It may though, nevertheless," replied Uncle Thomas. "It is much used, even in the East Indies, where they have what is called the rainy season. For many months, no rain falls at all in those countries, and then, for several weeks, it pours

without stopping, in torrents such as you can scarcely dream of in this temperate climate. Yet even there, a well-made thatch makes a dry house; and many people live in huts built entirely of bamboo stems covered with matting, and sometimes roofed only with leaves. I have seen growing trees with their foliage so thick and so beautifully arranged, that they made excellent umbrellas in a storm, hardly ever allowing a drop of rain to reach the earth around them, except where it trickled down the great branches to the stem, and down the stem to the soil, to reach the roots. The worst objection to thatch, however, is that it gives shelter to insects, and, in very hot countries, to reptiles. In the East Indies, and parts of Africa and South America, the house-lizards, and even some toads, run up the walls and over the ceilings like flies. I once caught a large toad on the wall of a parlour, directly over a piano, while a young lady was playing upon it."

"Now, Uncle Thomas!" said Augustus; "isn't that a traveller's story? How can a toad climb up a smooth wall?"

"How curious it is," replied the old gentleman,

"that an intelligent lad can go through the world with his eyes shut! Did you never see a tree-frog? And how do you suppose the little animal managed to get up the tree? The fact, you may witness in your own country, on any damp summer evening; then, why is it so surprising that, in tropical climates, where everything that has life seems to be produced on a grand scale, a toad as big as a bullfrog should do what a tree-frog does here every day. All these reptiles that climb walls are furnished with powerful suckers on their feet, much like those of the common fly, which you may examine under the microscope when you please. If an elephant were provided with the same instruments, and of sufficient size, there would be no good reason why he should not walk to the top of the Bunker Hill Monument as easily as a fly walks up a window-pane."

Augustus looked very much ashamed of his ignorance and inattention when he listened to this simple explanation of what seemed to him, at first, a great mystery; but Uncle Thomas very good-humouredly continued:

"There are other things besides lizards, frogs, and

flies, that contrive, somehow or other, to get into the thatch or matting roofs of the East Indians. Scorpions climb there, by the aid of their claws, if the houses are constructed of wood; and if poles or other lumber be allowed to lean slanting against them, even serpents find their way there. Scorpions are very poisonous. They carry their poison in a little sack at the root of the last joint of their tails, which joint is hollow, and has a very fine tube running through it, from the poison-sack to the very end of the sharp, horny hook that terminates the tail."

"And how do they manage to hurt people? Do they bite, or do they sting?" inquired little Anna.

Uncle Thomas informed her that they have bodies and claws for all the world like a crab, and that they can pinch like crabs, but their pinch does very little harm. They use their claws instead of hands, for climbing and eating; but the sting of their tail produces terrible inflammation, and sometimes, though not often, occasions death. He told her that their tails are long and narrow, and furnished with a great many joints, so that when the animal wishes to strike and wound anything, it throws its tail over its back

and head, in the form of the neck of a swan, and when it stings, it does so by suddenly straightening its tail, and burying the sharp hook in the flesh. The force of the blow presses the poison-bag, and squeezes the poison into the wound; so you see, that we might compare a scorpion to a crab with a snake for a tail, the snake's head always looking the wrong way.

"Ha! ha!" shouted Augustus, "this is queer enough! But, Uncle, how does a snake poison with its teeth? Are all its teeth poisonous?"

"By no means, my fine fellow," replied the old gentleman; "the bites of most snakes are perfectly harmless, or, at least, they do no more injury than would the prick of as many needles or tenpenny nails, according to the size of their teeth—though, to be sure, such wounds as these would make are not very agreeable, and are sometimes very dangerous when people are not in very good health; they are apt to occasion disease somewhat like erysipelas, and sometimes lock-jaw, or, as it should be called, *tetanus* (for the jaws are not always locked in that disease). The *tetanus* is generally fatal, and erysipelas from

wounds is often so, and you had better avoid being bitten by any snakes, *unless they are very small!*"

"I don't want to be bitten by any," exclaimed Julian with a shudder.

"Well, that is a matter of fancy," replied Uncle Thomas, laughing; "I have been bitten by many, in catching them; for I used to be very fond of snakes, and kept a tame one, about six feet long, in my palanquin (a carriage in which men travel upon the shoulders of other men), just to protect my books and papers and coat, when I left my carriage, in my grass-cloth roundabout, to visit a friend, at Calcutta."

"Go in a roundabout, and leave your coat in the carriage!" cried Anna; "I thought you were more polite!"

"Anna, my child, don't be so pert! I am ashamed of you!" said her mother.

"Ah, Anna, politeness is very differently regulated in different countries," replied Uncle Thomas; "and it is hard to tell in which country the matter is best understood. If an Englishman eats with his fork alone, that is no good reason why an American should not use his knife; and if a Frenchman breaks

his egg into a tumbler, and so smears the glass that I can scarcely sit at the same table with him, I have at least the right to pursue what I consider the more decent plan of eating it from the shell. Still, it is very well, in all innocent matters, to follow the rule, 'When you are in Rome, do as Rome does.' Now, in the East Indies, when a Hindoo comes into the house of his equal or his superior, he always keeps on his turban and pulls off his shoes, for politeness' sake. Were he to enter with his shoes on, he might happen to be driven out by the servants, as I have known a man treated in Philadelphia, when I was a boy, because he had the impudence to appear at a ball in pantaloons and boots! Every gentleman then wore small-clothes, silk stockings and pumps; and powdered his head, even when he went to a dinner-party; and every lady wore hoops, on state occasions, looking as if her head and shoulders were popping out of a hogshead cut in half, that had been squeezed and compressed most unmercifully between others of its kind, till flattened out sideways to double its proper width. You may live to see the day when no woman

will be admitted in society who does not wear a Bloomer dress!"

Anna looked exceedingly puzzled by this philosophy, and her mother and brothers laughed heartily; but Uncle Thomas continued.

"In the East Indies the weather is very hot, and European gentlemen cannot wear their thick dress coats without great suffering. Yet fashion requires that they should show the world, at all times, that they are rich enough to own a cloth coat; so each keeps a servant to carry the coat behind him, while he goes out to dine, in his roundabout. Politeness, indeed, requires this; for if a man were, *there,* to pay a visit with his coat on, his host would be obliged in courtesy to offer him a roundabout of his own, to use during his stay; and we have no right to put our friends to unnecessary trouble."

"But, Uncle," said Augustus, "you forgot to tell us how poisonous snakes kill people."

"All poisonous snakes have two kinds of teeth in their jaws," he answered; "one set for ordinary use, and the other set, called fangs, for poisoning their prey. Rattlesnakes have two fangs, and the cobra-

di-capello, the most poisonous class of snakes in the world, has four. These are all hook-shaped, and hollow all the way from the root to the sharp end; and each fang is set upon a sack that is bedded in the upper jaw, from which the poison is squeezed through them, when they strike. These fangs are not used when the snakes are eating, but are laid quietly down, with their points backward, close to the gums, except when they wish to use them on their enemies, or on prey too strong to be otherwise held. Indeed, when these snakes have stricken three or four animals with their fangs, the poison becomes exhausted or spent, and it takes a long time for nature to refill the sacks. The snakes know this, and they do not like much to use the poison unnecessarily, for fear they might have none ready when most wanted. It collects in the sack much faster in warm than in cold weather; and this is the reason why snakes are so much more dangerous in harvest than in seed time. But we were speaking of these poisonous reptiles being able to creep up into thatched and matted roofs. There have been instances of the cobra-di-capello making its way through the roof, and

falling on to the middle of the table, while a company was dining; and I have heard of more than one case in which a scorpion has dropped from the ceiling into a plate of soup, which was consequently very *hastily* dismissed!"

"My dear sir!" exclaimed Mrs. Manners, "you must excuse me, but I am afraid the children will dream of these horrible things to-night, if we say any more about them. I know it is a great error in education to teach the young to abhor anything that the Almighty has made, for he has declared it all 'good.'"

"And Nature has declared it all *beautiful*," interjected Uncle Thomas.

"True," replied Mrs. Manners; "but—let us change the subject! I cannot overcome the prejudices of early life!"

"How much you have lost," remarked Uncle Thomas. "But," he added, "bring me the picture again, and let us see if we cannot find something in it more interesting than recollections of snakes and lizards."

"What kind of birds do you think these little boys are trying to catch?" inquired Julian, as he brought the picture to him once more: and the conversation became more general, as follows:

Uncle Thomas.—"Probably they are trying to catch partridges; for singing-birds are not usually taken in a fall-trap, like that represented in the engraving."

Julian.—"It is a figure-of-four trap, I guess. I have often seen the coachman set such a trap for rats, about the stable; but then the rats were always killed when it fell on them. Surely the little boys do not want to kill the poor birds."

Uncle Thomas.—"By no means; and in order that they may not be hurt when the lid falls, there is a box provided here, that is deep enough to hold the birds while standing up."

Augustus.—"And how do they bait the trap? Birds will not eat meat, and we cannot easily fix a grain of corn to the sharp end of a stick."

Uncle Thomas.—"I am not quite sure that you are right about the meat. Our common domestic fowls never enjoy health and lay well, unless we give them plenty of meat. Ask Betty, Mrs. Williams's cook, who came from the country, and she will tell you that she always cut up some uncooked liver, and even the offal of the fowls she dressed, to

give her chickens at least two meat dinners every week."

ANNA.—"Why, the nasty things won't eat one another, like cannibals! will they?"

MRS. MANNERS.—"I should hardly suppose they would do so; for the poet says, man is the only animal that preys on its own species."

UNCLE THOMAS.—"I am sorry to say, madam, that the poets are very apt to tell fibs when an untruth sounds pretty in rhyme. The wolf, the hyena, the pig, the rabbit, the porpoise, and, indeed, a great many animals, prey on their own kind; and I have known even chickens to kill and eat each other, when very much crowded together, and made very hungry, for want of a little animal food."

AUGUSTUS.—"And how do they get animal food, when they run wild in the woods? Partridges, you know, cannot be tamed; they will fly away when they grow old enough, however kindly you may treat them; I read that in my Natural History."

UNCLE THOMAS.—"You forget what quantities of insects our chickens will eat, when they can find them. A few broods of young chicks, let into a garden,

while the old hen is kept away, to prevent her from scratching up the plants in search of grubs, will soon clear half an acre of ground from most of its insects. Now, there is plenty of such food in the woods, and the fields, and the meadows, for all the wild-fowl that want them. Perhaps there are few animals really more useful to the farmer than partridges; for they pay many times over the value of all the grain they eat, by the quantity they save from the ravages of the insects.—However, to return to our trap. They do not bait partridge-traps with meat, nor do they put a grain of corn on the point of the sharp figure-of-four stick; they lay trains of corn for some distance round, all leading to the trap, and then sprinkle the bottom of the trap itself with corn. The poor little partridges pick up the grains scattered about, and drawing nearer and nearer, they at last venture timidly into the snare that awaits them. Finding that there is no appearance of danger,—for they are too stupid to suspect the figure-of-four of any mischief, though they may look a little shy at it at first,—they soon crowd in, and run about the box without any care, till, presently, some one runs rudely against

the cross-stick of the figure-of-four, and down comes the cover, and they are caught."

JULIAN.—"I wonder to hear you call them stupid: I thought partridges were very cunning; they hide their nests so well in the long grass or young grain, that it is very hard to find them."

UNCLE THOMAS.—"I suspect, the long grass and the young grain have more to do with that than the cunning of the birds; for they lay their eggs in the open fields or fence-corners, where any passing foot may crush the whole of them; and I leave you to decide whether that is very wise. There is certainly a peculiar kind of stupidity to be observed in all the birds that belong to the same family with the domestic fowl."

MRS. MANNERS.—"Will you be kind enough to tell us what birds you class with the domestic fowl?"

UNCLE THOMAS.—"It would take us too long to name the whole of them, but I will mention some of the most common. The peacocks, the turkeys, the pheasants, the partridges or quails, the grouses, the cock-of-the-rock, and the Guinea-fowl, all belong to the same great family of Pheasants that includes the

bantam, the dunghill, the Polish, the Shanghai, the Dorking, the Java, and the game-fowls. It is true that the American pheasant is extremely cunning in leading the hunter from its nest, and the Guinea-fowl is as much so in hiding its eggs; but they are all more or less remarkable for stupidity in some things. You know how the wild turkey, when running away from the dogs, will hide his head in a bush, thinking nobody can see him, and will stand so till they or the hunter come up and kill it. My grandfather once told me that, in the early days of the part of New Jersey where he lived, a wild turkey, pursued by hounds, actually ran to him for protection, and thrust its head under the broad flap of his coat, so that he caught it alive, and only saved it from the hounds to dress it for dinner. Was not that too bad? But the bird might easily have flown up into a tree and rested there in safety. It seems to forget that it has wings, when hotly chased! Did you ever hear how people sometimes entrap large quantities of wild turkeys in the West?"

JULIAN.—"No! Do tell us, Uncle."

UNCLE THOMAS.—"They build up a great pen, of

logs, just as children build what they call 'pig-pens,' with little sticks, on a nursery carpet. Then they dig a narrow passage in the ground under one of the lowest logs, making it just big enough to let one turkey pass in at a time. They then lay long trains of corn, from a great way off in the woods, all leading to this passage or hole, and scatter plenty of corn inside the pen, covering the top with boards. After a while, a flock of wild turkeys comes across the corn in the woods, and follows it gradually to the pen, eating up every grain by the way. When all that lies outside is eaten, some aldermanly bird—some turkey of influence in society—seeing such good fare within, thrusts his neck through the hole, and enters. The others, looking through the chinks between the logs of the pen, and seeing him enjoying himself so luxuriously, have their jealousy aroused; and it is not long before, one by one, the whole flock goes in also. But now comes the queerest part of the story. When the birds have finished their dinner, wanting, perhaps, a little of Adam's ale to wash it down with, they begin to think of getting out; but the stupid creatures never remember anything about how they

got in! They go stalking round the pen, poking their long necks between the logs, which are too near together to let their bodies pass; and not a *soul* among them,—not even the political alderman,—will stoop so low as to recover his freedom by bowing to circumstances; so, of course, they are all taken by the trapper in the morning."

All the children and their mother laughed heartily at this picture of dulness, and then Augustus was the first to speak.

Augustus.—"I hope all birds are not so stupid as these silly turkeys. What tribe do you consider the wisest among birds?"

Uncle Thomas.—"The naturalists tell us that the parrot tribe have most brain in proportion to their weight; and the ease with which we can teach them many amusing tricks would seem to show that they are birds of considerable good sense. I once knew an enormous Macaw that always took breakfast and supper with the family of his owner, sitting at table on the back of a chair turned towards it, and behaving with great good manners. He made it a point never to spill a drop or a crumb on the table-

cloth (for he used a plate and drank from a tea-cup), and he knew the custom of society so well that he would never accept of tea in the morning or coffee at night! But if I were to judge of the brains of birds by their cunning and mischievousness, I think I should be compelled to give the highest credit to those which resemble the crow; such as the daw, the magpie, the tropio, and the mino, from South America, the rook, the raven, &c. These birds are always full of their tricks, and most of them can talk, especially after the bird-fancier has performed some operation that I do not exactly understand, on the tip of the tongue. They are also very cunning thieves, and resemble mankind in one of its strongest characters—they are extremely fond of money and jewels."

JULIAN.—"I should like to hear some stories about the crows, for I don't see how they can know anything about the value of money:—indeed, I know they cannot;—then why do they love it and steal it?"

UNCLE THOMAS.—"They seem to steal, for the mere sake of stealing. Like rats and mice, they will sometimes carry off bank notes! But this the mice may

do, to line their nests for their tender young ones. There is a story told somewhere, of a servant-girl in Europe, who was hanged for stealing two or three bank notes, that had been left under a cup on the shelf over the dresser in the kitchen; and when, more than a year afterwards, the old dresser was torn down, these very notes, or pieces of them which could be recognised, were found in the lining of a mouse's nest, behind it! Then again; mice and crows seem to be very fond of anything that looks bright; and this is the reason why they carry away and hide gold, silver, and jewels. There is another story of a mouse that stole a lady's diamond finger-ring, from her dressing-table; and some time afterwards, a bad smell being perceived in one of the lower rooms, the surbase was taken off, and a dead mouse was found with the diamond ring around its neck. The mother had carried it to her nest for her children to play with, and one of the little ones had put its head through the ring. As it grew larger, the ring gradually choked it, and thus it met with capital punishment for its mother's fault. This is not the first instance, by any means, in which the innocent have

suffered for the guilty; and I would recommend you to be very careful how you venture to charge a servant with stealing, for you see that there are many thieves in the world besides those which walk on two legs. But now let us try if we cannot find, among our little books, some anecdotes about the cunning of birds of the crow kind.

Uncle Thomas then turned over the books for a little while, and presently exclaimed, "Here are two stories of the raven, written by a lady in England who loves children very much, and who never tells them anything but what is true, if she can help it. I will read them to you." And he began, as follows:

THE RAVEN THAT WOULD BE A COXCOMB.

THERE was, some fifty years ago, a cunning and mischievous raven, named Ralph, kept at a lonesome farmhouse in Derbyshire. He was a great favourite with all the family, though he often created much

plague and trouble by his thievish tricks. Whatever came in his way, which was not too heavy for him to lift, he carried off; yet, though every one knew who was the thief, he seldom came in for punishment. The servants and different members of the family were blamed instead, for leaving things in his way. Notwithstanding the care, however, which everybody took to put things in their places, Ralph found many a little article of which he made prize, and many a one which was never missed at the time.

After Ralph had practised his thievery for some years, all his hoard came one day suddenly to light. He had buried it in, as he thought, a cunning hole that he had made in the thatched roof of a barn. His treasures grew and grew, and the hole had been deepened and deepened, till it was as deep as the thatch itself, and then all his accumulation fell through upon the barn-floor. And what a queer collection there was!—thimbles, small pieces of money, balls of cotton, knitting-needles, curtain-rings, one or two gold rings, a brooch, sleeve-buttons, two salt-spoons, a mustard-pot lid, a seal and the gold-setting of a seal, combs, little old housewives, pincushions,

buckles, hair-pins, and all the multitude of small things that abound in the houses of tolerably well-conditioned people. There was a world of amusement in the owning of Ralph's treasury, and many an old forgotten thing was brought to light, and many another was found of which nobody could give any account.

"The winter after this event, poor Ralph came to an untimely end. The travelling tailor who used to come now and then to the house, to make and mend the clothes of the family, had made him a comb and wattles, of scarlet cloth, like those of a chanticleer, which he allowed to be put on, and seemed to wear with as much pride as a young soldier wears his new uniform. Not long after being thus dressed off, there chanced to be a fair in the neighbourhood, and, as several members of the family went to it, Ralph saw no reason why he might not go also. So off he flew after them, and, arriving in the height of the fair, perched upon the roof of a house which stood in the centre of the bustle. The poor fellow had all his finery on, and was immediately noticed, every-

body taking him for some wonderful bird, and everybody being desirous of securing him.

"Unfortunately a man with a gun was at hand, and, to make sure of so strange a creature while he was within reach, fired at him, and poor Ralph and his finery fell together. Hardly had he reached the ground, when his old friends of the farm came up, with a crowd that had been drawn to the spot by the firing of the gun, and in the strange nondescript creature they instantly recognised their old favourite. Great was the lamentation that was made over him, and loud was their indignation at the rabble who had so hastily ended his days. His sagacity was continually talked of; story after story was told of him, and so great was the sympathy of all the fair-going people, that for some time they forgot their amusements, to condole over the unfortunate raven that came to the fair in all his finery to meet so tragic an end."

This story amused the children amazingly, and they had so much to say about it that I do not know when they would have come to an end, if

Uncle Thomas had not reminded them that he had still another about a raven, which was so short that they had better hear it at once. Then they all became silent, and Uncle Thomas proceeded.

THE RAVEN'S DINNER-PARTY.

"THERE was a Raven kept a few years ago at Newhaven,—an Inn on the road between Buxton and Ashbourn. This bird had been taught to call the poultry, and like the parrot of Paraquay, could do it very well, too. One day,—the table being set out for the coach-passengers' dinner,—the cloth was laid, with the knives and forks, spoons, mats, and bread, and in that state it was left for some time, the room-door being shut, though the window was open. The raven had watched the operation very quietly, and, as we may suppose, felt a strong ambition to do the like.

"When the coach was just arriving, the dinner was carried in—but, behold! everything on the dinner-

table had vanished—silver spoons, knives, forks, all gone! But what was the surprise and amusement to see, through the open window, upon a heap of rubbish in the yard, the whole array very carefully set out, and the raven performing the honours of the table to a numerous company of poultry, which he had summoned about him, and was very consequentially treating to bread."

"It seems to me," remarked Mrs. Manners, "that the first unfortunate raven actually died of vanity. Do you think, Uncle Thomas, that animals really have human passions? It sometimes appears to me that it cannot be otherwise, when I look at the countenances of horses and dogs. I think I have seen them smile, and we all know that they look very differently, when they are angry and when they are pleased. Then, too, some are so gentle and others so fierce, even among those of the same kind, that it makes instinct a very puzzling thing to think of."

"When men write books about *reason*, and keep it all to themselves, without allowing any whatever to animals," replied Uncle Thomas, "they have the

argument all in their own hands. I have never yet seen a definition of the word *instinct*, that would include anything like all the wonderful instances of what seemed to be reason in brutes and birds, that I have either read of or witnessed. As to the affections, animals certainly possess them in a remarkable degree; and, to show that it is so, I will read you another little anecdote from the same lady-author who told us about the ravens." Uncle Thomas then read the following story.

THE BULLFINCH THAT DIED OF JOY.

"THERE was once a bullfinch kept by a lady, and it was so extremely fond of her, as to exceed in attachment any other I ever heard of. Her presence seemed like a sort of sunshine to him, and he sung and rejoiced with his whole heart when she was by; but he drooped in her absence, and would sit silent in his cage for whole days together.

"The lady fell sick, and was confined to her bed for a week with so severe an illness as to be entirely disabled from thinking of the bird. At length, when she was sufficiently recovered to see him, she ordered his cage to be brought and set upon the bed beside her. The poor bird knew her voice in an instant, though it was weak and low with her extreme fever. The cage-door was opened; he uttered a shrill cry between a song and a scream—fluttered from her hand to her cheek, and then fell down dead!"

"Is it possible," asked Uncle Thomas, "to find a more touching example of affection than this, even among men? I think not," he continued; "and yet I have seen bullfinches of very ill temper, that seemed to have no attachment at all, for they would peck furiously at the very hand that fed them."

"Do bullfinches live in America?" inquired Anna.

The old gentleman replied, "Only in cages, like the canary-bird. The canary-bird comes from a hot climate, and the bullfinch from Europe, especially England, and it requires great care and attention to keep them alive in this country."

"Do they sing sweetly? I never saw one in my life!" said Anna.

"That is not very astonishing, my child," returned Uncle Thomas, "for your life has not been a very long one yet. But I have often been surprised that so few of them are imported; for they are, without exception, the most delicious little singers in the world. They learn airs, and even very difficult ones, with great ease; and their voice is so exquisitely soft, gentle, and low, that it scarcely seems to have any resemblance to the voice of a bird. It is like the tone of an ivory flageolet, but vastly softer and sweeter. You can hardly hear it beyond the door of the room; but I have often thought that a poet in his study would have richer dreams of heaven, if he could have a bullfinch in its cage, standing ever by his side, to breathe in his ear its quiet melody, which would never rouse him from his revery, but would for ever mingle with it, like the low hum of the wind in the tree-tops, or the lulling music of a waterfall in some lonely glen."

"I think, if I kept a pet, I would rather have one that could sing loud enough to be heard—something

that could whistle like a trumpet. I would rather hear an eagle scream than a canary-bird sing, any day," remarked Augustus.

"How can you say so?" said Julian, in astonishment.

"Augustus will be an orator or a hero," replied Uncle Thomas, "while you, Julian, will be a poet or a philosopher. Nature has music for all tastes, and we must buy Augustus a *mino*—that strange creature so much like a large black-bird or small crow—from South America. It talks much more distinctly than any parrot, pronouncing the letters B and P, M and N, which no other bird can do. Then, its voice can be heard for a quarter of a mile, and it sings most nobly, with a prodigious range of note. Some even say that it has double organs of song, and can accompany itself in a duet; the base being given at the lower part, and the air at the upper part of the windpipe. This I cannot believe, but I have heard it utter music that I could scarcely understand in any other way; and when it pours out its full tide of song, the sound is so loud and searching, that I have

sometimes had to rush out of the room with a pain in my ears. I think I prefer the bullfinch."

"And is the mino affectionate?" asked Julian.

"Not like the bullfinch," said Uncle Thomas; "for he does not appear to attach himself to *individuals* so much as to *all men*. He is very much of a public character, and loves everybody alike; going perhaps, 'for *the greatest good of the greatest number*.' When let out from his cage, he will dart round the room, and, in a few minutes, every unfortunate spider is dragged from his hiding-place and swallowed. These dainties being exhausted, he makes more deliberate war upon the flies. He will search every crack in the wall or casement, and thrust his long, sharp bill between the leather and the paper of the back of a book in search of insects, which, in his native country, harbour everywhere. He will even turn the leaves of a book, one by one, by inserting his bill, and then opening his mouth, so as to make room for his quick, bright eye to peep under; and woe be to any unfortunate little red ant that happens to have sought shelter there! The mino and the tropio, which very much resembles him in everything but

the power of speech, and in size (for the tropio is much smaller), will light upon any one's finger, and hop on to any one's head, looking around in the pertest and sauciest manner imaginable. I must confess, however, that their affection is much like that of the cannibal Feejee Island chief for the missionary, that was once sent among his savage countrymen. When asked if he knew the missionary, he replied, 'Yes, him very good man;' and when asked how he knew he was 'a good man,' he said, with great astonishment, 'How do I know? Why, *I ate a piece of him!*' Now, the tropio and the mino will hunt with their long bills under your nails, and peck severely at your fingers; and if they draw blood, which they very often do, their little tongues take it up with great delight. When you handle them, you must be careful of your eyes, for they would peck at them as readily as at your finger; and all this they do very good-humouredly, all the while loving you very much, Feejee-fashion, and having as little idea of doing wrong as the cannibal who thought the missionary *so very good!*"

It was some time before the children got over the

laugh into which the history of the mino had thrown them, and then little Anna remarked: "I should not like a mino or a tropio for my pet, but I wish mother would get me a nice little canary-bird, to sing for me when I wake in the morning."

"My child," returned her mother, "I think it cruel to keep pets: we never know their little wants, and they cannot tell us. In a state of nature, they know how to provide for themselves; but in our hands they must suffer very much. I knew a little girl once, when I was a little girl myself, that had one of the prettiest canaries I ever saw, but her mother told her how cruel it was to shut it up in a narrow prison, when God made it to sport about in the beautiful woods, and drink out of the sparkling springs, and spend its little life in one round of pleasure and joy, instead of being confined to a dirty cage, breathing the foul air that has been already breathed by human beings. The little girl cried, ever so hard; she cried because she saw that she was cruel to it, and she cried again because she could hardly bear the idea of parting with it, she loved it so much;—yet she went to the cage and opened the

door, and set the dear little bird free! Now, how do you think her mother paid her for being such a good girl, and making so great a sacrifice?"

"I am sure I cannot tell! But I know, I should have cried my eyes out, if it had been mine!" said Anna, looking almost ready to cry at the thought.

"Well; she wrote her a beautiful piece of poetry, all out of her own head; and I remember every word of it."

"Oh, do repeat it to us, mother; do, now!" cried Anna.

"But, do you think you would have had the courage to do as that little girl did?" asked Mrs. Manners.

Anna looked very much troubled, and her eyes rested thoughtfully on the floor, for some minutes. Presently, she partly raised them again, with a timid, sidelong glance at her mother, and whispering so low that she could scarcely be heard, she very slowly said, "I think I should!"

"Then," said Mrs. Manners, "you *deserve* to hear the poetry!" And she repeated, in a sweet musical voice, the following lines.

THE BIRD SET FREE.

Sweet warbler of the woodland wild,
  Thy wing shall soon be free:
Thy prison bars, that generous child
  Has opened wide for thee.

Go then, and range the fields of air,
  Or seek the mountain spring:
Mount, mount; the lark shall meet thee there!
  Wilt thou not soar, and sing?

Nay, tremble not! Thy little breast
  Has surely pined to try
Where builds the happier bird its nest,
  Where swifter pinions fly.

Then haste, the forest boughs among,
  A wanderer wild and free;
And ever let thy sweetest song
  Proclaim thy liberty!

When the poetry was finished, and Anna had kissed her mother, in gratitude for her kindness, Mrs.

Manners observed that Uncle Thomas looked sad and thoughtful, and she inquired the reason.

"I was thinking, since you ask me," replied Uncle Thomas, "how much our best feelings often lead us astray. Nothing could have been kinder and more virtuous than the conduct of that little girl, in setting her favourite free; and yet, madam, in all human probability, she condemned it to a lingering death by starvation, or what is worse, to be torn to pieces by hawks, or pecked to death by other birds; for, I am sorry to say that my little favourites are far from being civil and hospitable to strangers."

"I never thought of that," said Mrs. Manners; "but do you really think that a canary-bird could not provide for itself, in our woods?"

"How should it, madam?" replied Uncle Thomas; "this country does not produce its proper food; it knows not where to seek shelter in a storm, and a single northeast gale would certainly chill it to death. Brought up in a cage, it has had no instruction from its parent to teach it how to fly to sunnier skies in the South; winter soon comes round; and every bird in the forest looks upon the stranger and fo-

reigner as a foe. To confine a bird in a cage, after it has once learned the habit of freedom, is a terrible oppression,—it often kills itself by beating against the bars; and when reared in confinement from the nest, its natural instincts are never properly developed, and it does not know how to be free. All things brought up in slavery of any kind, whether it be of the mind or the body; whether it be political, or moral, or social; must be slowly and carefully educated to freedom, or its first use of liberty, will be to destroy itself or others: this is one of the unchangeable laws of nature."

Uncle Thomas rarely indulged in the use of such highflown language as this, when in the presence of the young folks, and little Anna could not exactly understand him; but Mrs. Manners saw very well what he meant, and even Augustus and Julian thought they could partly comprehend it.

"So, then, Uncle Thomas," said Julian, "you think that if the people in Europe were to become free, like the Americans, they would not know what to do with themselves, and would set to pecking

other people to death, like a tropio; or they would be pecked to death themselves, like a canary-bird."

Uncle Thomas bowed.

"That is," said Julian, "it takes a great deal of time to teach either birds or men how to be free, when they have never known, in all their lives, how to provide for themselves!"

Uncle Thomas looked very serious.

"Then, if mother does give me a canary-bird," said Anna, "I must not let it go!"

Uncle Thomas smiled, till he showed all the front-teeth he had.

"And I must take care not to give you one," remarked Mrs. Manners; "for that would be giving encouragement to the bad men who bring little birds away from their native land, to shut them up within iron bars, so that they have to take just what we please to give them, whether it is good for them or not!"

"It is well," said Uncle Thomas, "to be very '*sure we are right*' before we '*go ahead*' in anything, especially when everything we do affects the interests and the rights of others, whose feelings, wants,

and motives we have slender means of judging. But, most of all, we should be careful how we find fault with others for doing what we may think cruel, unless we know all the circumstances. I am sure that the little girl was right in letting her bird go, though she condemned it to certain death; yet I am very sure that it would be quite as wrong for you to do so, now that you have been taught the consequences:—whether it would be wrong for your mother to buy you one, since they are raised in great numbers in this country, I am not quite so sure; and *that*, I must leave to Providence and her own good sense, for the question is too deep for me."

Uncle Thomas then rose to go, for it was quite late; and all the family went with him to the door.

As soon as he was out of hearing, "Isn't he wise!" said Augustus.

"That he is!" cried Julian.

"Isn't he good?" asked little Anna.

"That he is!" said Mrs. Manners; "but shut up the house, Augustus, for it is bedtime."

THE THIRD EVENING.

It is a very rare thing, in this world, that our plans all work smoothly; and, especially when we are in search of pleasure, something or other is very apt to happen, that teaches us how uncertain is life, and tells us, even in the midst of our holiday, that we may be called from all we love and delight in here, at any moment. It is good for us that this should be so; and if we only cheerfully do our duty, it should not make us unhappy: in the world to which all good people must go, there is no trouble, no care,—and one long Christmas holiday endures for ever.

When the little family of Mrs. Manners came together round the centre-table, there lay the portfolio, as usual, but there was no Uncle Thomas!

Now, do not be frightened, young reader:—the good old gentleman was not dead; but he was very sick. A note came from Mrs. Williams to Mrs.

Manners, while she was sitting at the head of the tea-table. It told her that Uncle Thomas was seized, that afternoon, with a terrible giddiness in his head. The doctor had bled him very severely, and ordered that he should go to bed in a dark room, and that nobody should see him but Mrs. Williams, who insisted on nursing him. It told, also, that about four o'clock in the afternoon, he spoke to Mrs. Williams and said: "The good doctor thinks me much worse than I am. I shall be out again to-morrow; so, send my love to the little ones at Mrs. Manners's, and say I will try to be with them to-morrow evening, if Providence permit."

Here was a dreadful disappointment! The young folks were very melancholy. Anna actually cried; and Charlie, after looking at her steadily for a few moments, while his under lip grew bigger and bigger, burst out crying too. When, at last, he dried his tears, he begged his mother to send him to bed; "For," said he, "what use is there in sitting up, when Uncle Thomas is not here?"

"What shall we do, mother?" asked Augustus;

"it seems to me," he added, "that Christmas is not Christmas without him."

"Dear me!" said Julian, "I hope he will be better to-morrow. If he does not come again, our holiday will be spoiled altogether!"

"It is wrong, my dear children,"—remarked the mother,—"it is wrong, ungratefully to forget all the blessings we still have around us, and indulge ourselves in repining, because Providence holds back a part of our pleasures. This is not the way Uncle Thomas would tell you to behave. As he cannot be here to-night, let us try to do, as nearly as we can, just what he would wish us to do, and let us think that he sees us all the while, though he is shut up in his dark room at home. That is what will please him best, when he gets well enough to hear of it." She then sent Charlie to bed, and told Anna that it was her turn to choose the picture for the evening.

Anna, after a little while, wiped her eyes, and then began to turn over the leaves of the portfolio, though she could hardly see, there came such a mist over her eyes continually. At last, she said, while her voice still trembled, "I cannot bear to look any further;

here is a picture of a little boy and girl blowing soap-bubbles; will you try to tell us something about that?" —and she brought it to Mrs. Manners, as she sat in Uncle Thomas's place.

"My dear child," said the mother, "I cannot fit stories to everything, as poor Uncle Thomas can! But you have hit on the right picture this time:—our hopes of a merry holiday evening have proved to be just such soap-bubbles, as that boy is sending up so industriously, to please his sister. Yet you have often seen how beautifully the rainbow colours play over these bubbles, when the sun shines on them. Just so Hope colours *our* bubbles before they burst; let us blow another, and colour it with the hope that the good old man will be here again to-morrow."

"And what shall we do to-night?" asked Julian, looking almost frightened.

"We will spend the evening in reading a few stories from the books Uncle Thomas has left us, though I cannot enliven them as he does with remarks and anecdotes. Take your places, children, and let us begin." She then picked out one of the books, and began to read.

PAPA'S LETTER.

"A LETTER from papa! a *real letter*—paper, and ink, and all! A *real* letter from dear papa in England to his little ones at Philadelphia!"—The incident I am about to relate, I should inform my little readers, took place in Philadelphia.—"What a treat!—how happy we all are! nothing in the world could make us more happy."

"Yes, Ellen," replied the eldest girl, "there is something would make us more happy."

"More happy!" repeated Ellen.

"Yes, more happy;—papa himself! Only fancy how happy and how grateful to God we shall be when he returns."

"I wonder what he will bring me from London," said Robert, who, being the boy, and the only boy of the family, was, I fear, somewhat selfish.

Emily, the eldest daughter, smiled and replied, "You may be sure papa will bring to us whatever will be most useful for each to possess; above all, he

will bring back that affection which, while it protects, guides and blesses us. I do pray for his return," she added, fervently; and then, lowering her voice, continued, "and I pray that it may be quickly, when I see how ill and pale mamma looks."

"I do not think mamma looks ill," said little Ellen, stealing up to her sister, and placing her rosy lips to her ear; "I do not think mamma looks ill;—see how pink her cheek is now, and how her eyes brighten while she reads papa's letter." Emily sighed heavily, and Ellen crept to her mother, and,—nestling her head in her lap, and twining her arm round the thin wrist which rested on Mrs. Allan's knee—waited with much patience till she had finished.

"Now, tell me all papa says," exclaimed the little girl, joyfully, "tell me every word." Mrs. Allan folded Ellen to her bosom, and, while she pressed her lips on her fair brow, Ellen felt one or two tears fall upon her cheek: her little heart saddened, and she whispered, "Are you ill, mamma?" Mrs. Allan made no reply. "Is papa ill, mamma?"

"No, dearest," answered her mother, "thank God, he is well and happy!—as happy as he can be away

from his family. He has already bought for you, Robert, a most beautiful lathe, and all the tools you desired for your workshop."

Robert jumped up in ecstasy. "Oh, how happy I am! nothing shall ever make me unhappy when once papa comes home."

"For you, Emily, he has purchased a piano, and pencils, and books, far superior to any that can as yet be procured here."

Emily's quick eye brightened, and she said, "How very grateful I am for his remembering me, when he had so many, many things to think of!"

"But you, Emily, knowing something of the uncertainty of human life, and the vanity of human wishes, do not, I hope, go so far as dear Robert, and say that nothing shall ever make you unhappy when papa comes home?"

While Mrs. Allan pronounced these words, she looked seriously at her daughter: Emily perfectly understood her, and her colour deepened; she felt a sensation of suffocation in her throat, and, unable to restrain her feelings, hid her face in her mother's bosom, and wept bitterly. Robert looked sad and

serious, and Ellen cried outright, from sweet childish sympathy, because her sister was so full of sorrow.

"My dearest Emmy," said Mrs. Allan, "I expected more fortitude from you. I see you understand that, from your dear papa's protracted absence, the probability is that when he returns you will have no mother. You, my beloved children, being constantly with me, are not sensible of the decay by which it has pleased God to warn me of approaching death; but I feel it. I have prayed to the Almighty fervently in the night-time, and in the early morning's watch, that I might be spared a little, little longer—at least until *his* return: but it is in vain; it is not God's will that I look upon my husband again in this world. And his will be done! Emily, my first dear child, say with me, 'His will be done!' My Robert, you must not look so resolute, even while the tears are running down your cheeks; bend your own inclinations to the mandate of the Lord, and say, 'His will be done!' It is an early trial, but it will be sanctified to your good; it will teach you the vanity of human wishes, and I pray that it may make you all more and more united: Emily is old enough—"

but now poor Mrs. Allan's feelings had exhausted her strength, and she fainted on her daughter's shoulder. Robert and Ellen began to scream and wring their hands; but Emily entreated them to be calm; and, in humble imitation of that mother whom she so tenderly loved, and whose fortitude she endeavoured to possess, she procured the necessary restoratives, and laid her on a couch. It was a beautiful trait in Emily's character, the steadiness with which she laboured to attain the most useful acquirement in the world, a command over self. How many persons have I seen actually useless members of society, from a want of what is called presence of mind; how many girls will stand still and scream, instead of rendering assistance; how many will shrink from the sight of a wound, instead of endeavouring to bind it up, and so relieve the sufferings of their fellow-creatures!

Women would do well to remember—nor can the truth be impressed upon them at too early an age—that all the brilliant accomplishments, all the solid information, all the learning in the world, are nothing worth, in comparison with a patient and cheerful temper, and an affection for, and perseverance in, the

moral and domestic duties of life. Home ought to be the temple of a virtuous female: she may leave it occasionally, and be happy amid the beautiful fruits and flowers of the world; but let her, like the bee, gather honey from them all, and let that honey be reserved for her own dwelling, be it a palace or a cottage. No one felt and acted upon this principle more than Mrs. Allan; and neither the precept nor the example was lost upon Emily. It was really extraordinary to see the patience and the wisdom of a girl who had just entered her fourteenth year; how she watched by her mother's sick-bed, how she checked her brother's selfishness, and directed Ellen's ardent temper; so that, instead of being a torment, she became a blessing to all around her: and, above all, to observe the command she obtained over self,—how she learnt to restrain her tears when her mother spoke of dying; how she bent her own desires to the will of the Almighty; and how truly and fervently she said and felt, in the morning and the evening, at midnight and mid-day, "Thy will be done!"

Her mother continued growing worse and worse;

and at last endured so much pain that the physician began to doubt that her complaint was consumption: he was not by any means wedded to his own opinion, and suggested the propriety of having additional advice. In the mean time letters again arrived from England, and one in particular to Emily from her father, directing who it was he wished to be consulted, and conjuring her to watch over her mother till his return, which would be immediate.

When the "new doctor," as little Ellen called him, arrived, he said at once that the physician had been at first mistaken, but now was in the right,—that the complaint was not consumption,—and that Mrs. Allan might yet be restored to her family if she would submit to an operation: this the poor sufferer immediately consented to, but added, that as Mr. Allan was about to return so much sooner than she had dared to expect, she would wait for his arrival. "I should not," she added, "have strength to support it if not attended by some relative, some one whose hand I might grasp and feel that a relative was with me."

"Mamma!" exclaimed Emily, "dear mamma, do

not put it oft; delay will only confirm this horrid disease—trust to me, I will stay with you, I will hold your hand, I will neither scream nor faint,—trust me, I have seen you practise fortitude too frequently not to know its advantage."

The new doctor was a tall, thin, pale Frenchman, not quite so polite as Frenchmen are in general, and a little sarcastic. "*Ma foi! mademoiselle,*" he said, "you are very heroic; why, let me see, you cannot be twelve years old, and yet you talk of being present at an operation which I would hardly suffer my junior pupils to attend!"

"I am fourteen, sir," replied the little maid, drawing herself up to her full height; "I have had five teeth drawn without screaming; I have nursed my brother through the hooping-cough, and my sister in the measles." She paused, and her colour rose, and her voice faltered. "I have attended my mother for several months nearly night and day, when I feared—believed—that God would take her from us, that my father would return to a desolate home! and now, that a chance, a blessed chance, a more than chance presents itself, do you think, sir, that,

because I am so very little of my age, I cannot have strength and firmness?" Again she paused, astonished at her own boldness, and not much relieved by the doctor's patting her head, and then placing his hand under her chin so as to turn upwards her blushing face, saying, "Well, my little maid, we shall see; the first part of your proposition is wise,—no time can be lost, no time must be lost; to-morrow I will see Mrs. Allan; she will not, for the sake of such dear ties, trifle with her life." Soon afterwards he left the chamber.

Now everybody in the world knows that no young lady in her teens likes to be patted on the head. I have seen little girls of twelve turn up their noses at it, but to "miss in her teens," it savours somewhat of an insult. Whether Emily Allan did or did not so look upon it, I cannot pretend to say; but this I know, that, before the "new doctor" descended to the hall, a light, small hand rested on his arm, and soft blue eyes were uplifted to his countenance.

"Doctor, can I do anything to convince you that my fortitude, if you trust me to-morrow, will not fail?" inquired Emily.

"My dear, you are really a very surprising little person, but I would not trust one of my junior pupils to attend a patient under such circumstances, lest he might shrink or tremble, and so lead the patient to suppose the danger was imminent, when perhaps it was over."

"Sir," she persisted, "I know mamma well, and I know that if I were with her, her desire to set me an example of fortitude would conquer her feelings of pain, and enable her to support her sufferings better; and I also know that her tenderness for my feelings will prompt her to wish me away, though you can imagine how, as she is far from her own relatives, she would naturally desire to have, as she said, some support in her hour of trial." The doctor looked astonished. "Put my resolution, sir, to any test you please: draw one, two, or three teeth—I will not flinch; they will grow again. I would part with this arm if you would let me hold mamma's hands to-morrow!"

"You are so earnest, so affectionate, *ma petite*," replied the gentleman, "that, though I have no inclination to draw your teeth, I would trust you;

but it was only last week that one of my pupils got so nervous while assisting me in an operation upon a woman, that she was near losing her life from his inability to perform his duty."

"Sir," exclaimed Emily, seizing his hand, "she was not his mother!" The worthy man was touched, for he said, "Go—you are a good child, a very good child;—you must know my Madelaine. If it be possible, your mother shall be saved. I think you may be trusted."

"Shall I tell mamma so, sir?"—"You may; but mind, I am not quite certain; do not say what I have not said,—do not add to it." "I have been taught, sir, that an exaggeration is only a shabby untruth," replied Emily. "We will pray for strength; and, dear, dear sir, I am sure, if you agree, you will not repent having granted my request."

"That is a very extraordinary little girl," said the new doctor to the physician who had previously attended Mrs. Allan.

"She is, indeed; her mother has so well inculcated the benefits arising from self-possession, that I have been astonished at the fortitude she so systematically

practises. She is worthy, in that respect, to be a descendant of the red Indians."

"Oh!" exclaimed the Frenchman, taking a huge pinch of snuff, "Oh! we shall see!"

* * * * *

Have any of my young friends seen a dear and tender parent on the edge, the very brink, of the grave?—have they watched day by day her hand grow more thin, her cheek more pale?—have they heard the blessed words of comfort from her lips?—have they observed how she clings to them with all a mother's tenderness; and yet, firmly believing in the wisdom of her Father, her heavenly Father, who gives her strength to support her sufferings, commits them to his protecting care, in full reliance on his mercy?—have they ever gathered for her sweet flowers, and then thought that, even as the perfume and beauty were departing from those flowers, was she whom they loved fading from the earth? Have they experienced all this, and then, when they believed that the time was at hand, and that nothing short of a miracle could save her from the grave, has hope suddenly burst upon them,—have they heard the

blessed sound, "She may yet live!"—can they remember the sensations *that* sound created?

If they cannot, imagination can hardly portray what Mr. Allan's children experienced, when the new doctor, and their old friend and physician, closely followed by Emily, entered Mrs. Allan's room the next morning. I will not harrow up either my reader's feelings, or my own, by details of the two hours' agony.

Suffice it, that Emily was so far mistress of herself as to be declared the best girl in Philadelphia. From the position in which she was placed, she could only see her mother's face, which she bathed with strong perfumes, and watched every varying tint with so much judgment, that to see her child's calmness sustained Mrs. Allan through the whole. When it was all over, when the assurance came upon her that there was every probability of her beloved parent's recovery, when her aid was no longer necessary, when, through the influence of a powerful narcotic, that dear mother had fallen into a heavy sleep, the French doctor, who for many hours never left the room, carried the little heroine, in a complete state of exhaus-

tion, to her chamber, where Ellen, with her face buried in cushions, was praying on her knees for dear mamma; and sturdy Robert, his lips white and trembling, was really unable to ask how his mother was.

When Emily recovered, what think you she saw on a chair by her bedside? "A letter from papa?" No—you pale little girl, guess! "A present from papa?" No, guess, Miss Rosy-lips, again. Well, I am sure that sage little maid in the corner will surely make it out; can you tell? "No, ma'am." Then you all give it up? It was PAPA HIMSELF! what think you of *that* as a surprise?

"I can assure you, sir," said the French doctor to Mr. Allan, "if that young lady was a young gentleman, he ought to be brought up to be a physician; I wish you joy, sir, of your children!"

The thanksgiving in that house was great. "And now," said Robert, "I may be happy; but I have seen so much sorrow that I will never build too much on anything."

"Except the goodness of God," interrupted Emily;

"and, indeed, we can never build too much on that; for, whether in joy or sorrow, it is never-failing."

"You are always wise, Emily," said Ellen.

"No," she replied; "my heart is so full that I could weep and dance, and all for joy—pure, pure joy. Do you know that in less than a week, our new doctor says, mamma will be able to listen to the tone of my piano?"

"Do you think you could do as Emily did, if I were to undergo an operation?" asked Mrs. Manners of Anna, with a smile.

"I would try," replied the child, with a shudder.

"You fainted at the sight of blood, last month when Julian cut his finger so badly."

"But you know that I had nothing to do; for you bandaged it yourself. I think I could have done it, if there had been nobody else to help. And then you know—you know it was not—it was not—"

"Was not what, my child? speak out."

"It was not—my mother!" screamed little Anna, as she buried her head in her mother's lap, and sobbed.

Mrs. Manners kissed away the child's tears, and said, "Well, here is another story, that perhaps may be less disagreeable to nervous little girls;" and she proceeded to read it.

MARTHA AND MARY.

It was when the persecution of the people called Quakers had, for a short season, somewhat abated its rigour, and they ventured to attend their religious assemblies without fear of injury to their families in the mean time, that Walter Pixley and his wife, a staid and respectable couple belonging to that despised community, rode eleven miles to their county town of Stafford, to be present at a meeting, at which that apostle-like young man, Edward Burrough, was to preach, leaving their little daughter, Martha, under the care of an aged woman, who was, at that time, their sole female domestic.

Martha was a grave child, though but seven years of age: her young mind had taken its tone from both of her parents. She had been born in a season of persecution, had been cradled, as it were, in anxiety and sorrow; and, as she grew old enough to comprehend the circumstances that surrounded her, she saw her parents constantly filled with apprehension for the safety of their lives and property. She had heard them talk over the grievances, spoiling of goods, the maimings, the whippings, and the horrible sufferings of their persecuted brethren—persecuted even to the death; had heard of little children enduring, with the steadfastness of early martyrs, imprisonments and pains which would overcome even the strong man; till, unlike the ordinary child of her years, her countenance habitually wore a look of gravity, and her heart bled at the least thought of suffering or sorrow.

Martha's home was in a country place, surrounded by fields,—a pleasant, quiet valley, the patrimonial heritage of her father. It was harvest-time, and in the course of the morning, the old servant went out with the reapers' dinners, leaving little Martha to

amuse herself in her usual quiet way. She had not been long alone before a beggar-woman presented herself with a young child in her arms. Martha knew that it was her mother's custom to relieve distress in whatever shape it presented itself, and the story the woman told, whether false or true, touched her to the soul; she gave her, therefore, the dinner which had been set aside for herself, and compassionated her in words of the truest sympathy, and when the child in the woman's arms wept, like Pharaoh's daughter, her heart yearned towards it. Strange it may be to all, but so it was, for our story is true, when the beggar-woman saw the affection with which little Martha regarded the child, she proposed to sell it to her, and Martha, innocent of all guile, readily accepted the proposal. All her little hoard of money was produced,—the bargain was struck, and the two parted perfectly satisfied with the transaction. The child was beautiful as the Hebrew boy himself; and Martha sat down with it upon her knee, and lavished upon it all the endearing tenderness which her most affectionate nature suggested.

In a short time the child fell asleep; and, as she

sat gazing upon it, a half-defined fear stole into her mind, that perhaps she had done wrong in taking upon her this charge unknown to her parents,—that perhaps they would be displeased. She rose up in haste, and looked from door and window for the beggar-woman; but neither across the fields, nor down the valley, nor upon the distant highways was she to be seen; and then, with that sentiment, which from the time of the first error in Paradise, has become a part of our human nature, she was afraid, and thought to hide the child. She made it a comfortable warm bed with a blanket, in a large press, and kissing its sleeping eyes, and wishing that she had no fear, she left it to its repose, and began with great anxiety to look out for the return of her parents. To the old domestic she said not one word of what she had done.

After two hours, all which time the child slept soundly, Walter Pixley and his wife returned. The good mother, who was accustomed to help in all the domestic business, employed herself in preparing the early afternoon meal, and Martha sat down with her parents to partake of it. While Walter Pixley and

his wife were in the midst of their review of the events of the morning—of Edward Burrough's extraordinary sermon, and of the concourse to whom it was addressed, they were startled by what seemed to them the cry of a child. Martha's heart beat quick, and her sweet face grew suddenly pale, but her parents were not observing her. The good man stopped in the middle of a sentence, and both he and his wife turned their heads towards the part of the house whence the sound proceeded, listened for a second or two, and then, all being again still, without remarking upon what they supposed was fancy, they went on again with their conversation. Again a cry louder and more determined was heard; and again they paused. "Surely," said the wife, "that *is* the voice of a young child."

The critical moment was now come—concealment was no longer possible; and Martha's affection mastering her fear, as the infant continued to cry, she darted from the table, and exclaimed, "Yes, yes, it is my child!" and the next moment was heard audibly soothing her little charge, in the chamber above, with all the tenderness of the fondest mother.

Mrs. Pixley was soon at her daughter's side, full of the most inconceivable astonishment, and demanded from her whence the child had come, or how it had been consigned to her charge. Martha related the story with perfect honesty. The old domestic was then summoned, but she knew nothing of the affair. They were not long deliberations that followed. The family could not conscientiously burden themselves with another dependant, and one especially who had no natural claim upon them, in these perilous and anxious times, when they could not even insure security for themselves; and besides this, how did they know but this very circumstance might be made, in some way or other, a cause of offence or of persecution,—for the world looked with jealous and suspicious eyes upon the poor Quakers. Father Pixley, therefore, soon determined what he had to do in the affair,—to make the circumstances known at the next village; to inquire after the woman, who, no doubt, had been seen either before or after parting with the child; and also to state the whole affair to the nearest justice of the peace.

Within an hour, therefore, after the discovery of

the child, the good man might be seen making known his strange news at the different places of resort in the village, and inquiring from all if such a person as the little girl had described the woman to be, had been seen by any; but, to his chagrin and amazement, no one could give him information,—such a person had evidently not been there. He next hastened to the justice's. It was now evening, and Walter Pixley was informed that his worship very rarely transacted any business after dinner, and that especially "he would not with a Quaker." Walter, however, was not easily to be put by; he felt his business was important, and, by help of a gratuity to the servant, he gained admittance.

The justice was engaged over his wine, and he received Walter Pixley very gruffly, and in the end threatened him with a committal to jail for his pains. The poor Quaker had been in jail the whole of the preceding winter, and he remembered too wofully the horror of that dungeon to bring upon himself willingly a second incarceration. It was of no use seeking for help at the hands of the justice; therefore he

urged his business no further, and returned quietly to his own house.

Against the will, therefore, of the elder Pixleys, the child was established with them; and it was not long before the father and mother as cordially adopted it as their little daughter had done from the first beholding it. "For who knows," argued the good Walter Pixley, "but the child may be designed for some great work, and therefore removed thus singularly from the ways of evil, for our teaching and bringing up? Let us not gainsay or counteract the ways of Providence." This reasoning abundantly satisfied the pious minds of the good Friends, and the little stranger was regularly installed a member of the family, by the kindred name of Mary.

At the time little Mary was first received under this hospitable roof, she might be about six months old, a child of uncommon beauty; nor, as the months advanced into years, was the promise of her infancy disappointed. She was, in disposition and tone of mind, the very reverse of her grave and gentle elder sister, as Martha was now considered; she was bold and full of mirth,—full of such unbroken buoyancy

of heart as made the sober Mother Pixley half suspect that she must have come of some race of wild people. Certain it was, the subdued and grave spirit of the Pixleys never influenced her; and as Martha grew up into womanhood, and the quietness and sobriety of her younger years matured into fixed principle, she embraced with a firm mind the peculiar tenets in which she had been brought up, and would have stood to the death for the maintenance of them. Mary also advanced past the years of girlhood, but still remained the gay, glad, bold-spirited being that she had ever been. She revered all the members of the persecuted body to whom her friends belonged, and would have suffered fearlessly for their sakes; still, their principles and practices she never would adopt. Her beautiful person was adorned, as far as she had opportunity, in the prevailing fashion of the times; and she often grieved the sober minds of every member of the family, by carolling forth "profane songs," as Mrs. Pixley called them; while how she became acquainted with them remained for ever a mystery. Often did the conscientious mind of Father Pixley question with himself whether it was quite

right to maintain so light a maiden under his roof; but then the affectionate being, who had no friends save them in the world, had so entwined herself round the hearts of all the household, that the good man banished the idea as inhuman, and never ventured to give it utterance. Martha and her mother, meantime, strove to win over this bright young creature to their own views, and for a few moments she would settle her beautiful face to a solemn expression, try to subdue what her friends called "her airy imagination," and attend the preaching of some eminent Friend. But it would not do;—the true character burst forth through all,—Mary was again all wit and laughter, and though her friends reproved, they loved her, and forgave all.

On the accession of James II., which is the period at which our little narrative is now arrived, persecution raged again with greater violence than ever; and the Pixleys, along with seventeen other Friends, both men and women, were dragged from their meeting-house by a brutal soldiery, under the command of the justice we have before mentioned, to the dungeon-like county jail, in the depth of winter. The hard-

ships they endured were so dreadful that it is painful to relate them. They were kept many days without food, and allowed neither fire nor candle; their prison was damp and cold, and they were furnished with straw only for their beds. They were also forbidden to see their friends, who might have procured them some of the necessaries of life; nor were they allowed to represent, by letter, their case to any influential man of the county, who might have interested himself in their behalf. And to all this was added the brutality of a cruel jailer, who heaped upon them all the ignominy he could devise. In these dreadful circumstances lay the gentle Martha Pixley and her parents. Mary, not having accompanied them to their place of worship, did not share their fate.

Poor Mother Pixley's health had long been declining, and this confinement reduced her so low that in a few days her life was despaired of. Still, no medical aid could be procured, and the cloaks and coats of many of her suffering companions were given up to furnish covering for her miserable bed.

When the news came to Mary of the committal of her friends to jail, the distress of her mind expressed

itself in a burst of uncontrollable indignation; and then, asking counsel of no one, she threw on her hat and cloak, and, taking with her an old man who lived in the family as a labourer, she hurried to the justice's; and, as she did not appear with any mark of the despised Quaker, either in dress or manner, she soon obtained admittance. The magistrate was somewhat startled by the sudden apparition of so fair and young a maiden, and demanded her pleasure with unwonted courtesy, seating her in the chair beside him, and removing from his head the laced hat which he was wearing at her entrance. Mary made her demand for the liberation of her friends, the Quakers. The justice stared, as if doubting his senses, and rallied her on the strangeness of her request, charging upon the Quakers all those absurd and monstrous things which were alleged against them in those days. Mary, nothing abashed, denied every charge as false, and demanded, if not the liberation of her friends, at least the amelioration of their sufferings. As Mary pleaded, the justice grew angry, and at length the full violence of his temper broke

forth, and the high-spirited girl, even more indignant than terrified, rushed from his presence.

What was next to be done? She ordered her old attendant to saddle the horses, and mounting one, and bidding him follow on the other, she set off to the county town. There she found great numbers of Friends surrounding the prison with baskets of provisions, bedding, warm clothing, and fuel, begging for admittance to their perishing brethren. Little children, too, there were, weeping for their imprisoned parents, and offering their little all to the jailer, so that they might be permitted to share their captivity. Mary made her way through this melancholy crowd, peremptorily demanded access to the jailer, and was admitted; her garb, unlike that of the persecuted Quakers, obtaining for her this favour, as at the house of the justice. But here again her errand debarred her further success; the jailer would neither allow her to see her friends, nor would he convey a message to them. Mary could have wept in anger and vexation, and from intense sympathy, with the grief she had witnessed outside the walls, but she did not; she retorted upon the jailer the

severity of his manner, and bidding him look to the consequences, folded her cloak round her and walked forth again into the circle of Friends who surrounded the gate. The jailer laughed as he drew the heavy bolts after her, and bade her do her worst.

Among the Friends collected in the street before the prison, Mary heard that William Penn, who had just returned from his new settlement in America, was now in London. As soon as she heard this, she determined upon her plan of conduct. She knew his influence with the king, who, when Duke of York, had induced his brother, Charles II., to bestow on him that tract of land called Pennsylvania. To him, therefore, she determined to go, and pray him to represent to the king the deplorable sufferings of Friends in those parts.

When her old attendant heard of her meditated journey, he looked upon her as almost insane. To him the project was appalling. It would require many days to reach London, and who must take charge of the farm in his absence, seeing his worthy master was in prison? And then, too, though he had been willing to attend her as far as the next

town, would it be right for a young maiden and an old man to endanger their lives by so long and so strange a journey?

Mary was uninfluenced by his reasoning, nor was she to be daunted by his fears. "If," she said, "he would not accompany her, she would go alone." She bade him, therefore, to have her horse saddled by break of day, and retired to her own apartment to prepare for the journey.

"Of a surety," said the old man to himself, "she is a wilful young thing."

In the morning, however, she found not only her horse prepared, but the old man and his also; for wilful as she was, the old man loved her; and though he could not conjecture the object of so strange a journey, "he would," he said, "go with her to the end of the world."

Mary had ventured to make use of the stores in Walter Pixley's coffers, for she considered the lives of her friends were at stake. She was, therefore, sufficiently supplied with money for their journey.

For this time, the wild gaiety of Mary's spirits was gone, but instead, was a strong energy and deter-

mination of character, which supported her above fatigue, or the apprehension of danger; and day after day, from town to town, in the depth of winter, did she and her attendant journey onward. They had no intercourse with travellers on the road, nor did they make known to any one the object of their journey.

When she arrived in London, she went straight to the house where William Penn had his temporary residence, and without introduction or apology, laid before that great and good man the sad condition of her suffering friends. She then made him acquainted with her own private history, her obligations to the family of the worthy Walter Pixley, and the anxiety she now felt for the life of her, who had been as a mother unto her.

William Penn heard her with evident emotion, and promised to do all that lay in his power for her benefactors; though he assured her she had overrated his influence with the king. He then desired Mary to take up her abode under his roof; and bidding an attendant call in his mistress, he gave her into the hands of his fair and gentle wife, briefly relating

to her upon what errand the young maiden had come.

When Mary found her mission thus far so happily accomplished, and the door shut upon herself and her kind hostess, the over-strained energy of her spirit for a moment relaxed, and she wept like a feeble child. The fair wife of William Penn understood her feelings, soothed her with sympathy and encouraged her to open her heart freely. Never had Mary seen goodness so graceful and attractive as in the high-minded and gentle being before her. Her very soul blessed her as she spoke; she could not doubt but that all would be well; and with her heart comforted, assured, and filled with gratitude, it seemed as if a new life had been given to her.

The next day William Penn obtained an audience of the king, and so wrought upon him by the story of the heroic young creature under his roof, and the sufferings of her friends, that he desired she might be brought before him, and receive from his own hands the order for their enlargement.

Mary was accordingly arrayed in the best garment her scanty wardrobe permitted, by the elegant and

gentle hands of Gulielma Penn, who surveyed her beautiful face and figure with admiration, and then kissed her and blessed her as an affectionate mother might bless a beloved daughter.

Leaning upon the arm of her protector, she was conducted through a great chamber of lords and ladies, assembled for the occasion, into the presence of his majesty. Mary's heart beat violently, as her companion, drawing her arm from his, presented her to his sovereign, who graciously bade her speak her wishes without fear. Reassured by the kindness of the king's manner, almost forgetting the presence in which she stood, for what seemed to her the greater importance of her errand, she made her petition gracefully and well. She related all she had told William Penn of the great kindess of the Pixleys to her, and her otherwise desolate condition; she told of their domestic virtues, of their piety, and their firm loyalty; and lastly, of their wretched condition in the jail, with that of many others; and of the cruelty of the justice and the jailer; and then, almost unconsciously falling on her knees, she prayed so eloquently that they might be released, that the

king turned aside to wipe away a tear before he put forth his hand to raise her.

The petition was granted. The king himself put into her hands the order for their release, and then, praying God might bless her, and taking leave of William Penn very kindly, passed out of the presence-chamber. Many of the lords accompanied the king, but the rest closing around the almost terrified maiden, overwhelmed her with compliments. William Penn, who saw her confusion, apologized for her with all the grace of a courtier, and extricating her from the admiring company, conveyed her, like a being walking in a dream, to his own house.

Not a moment was lost in sending down by express the order for the Friends' enlargement, and, together with that, a dismissal from his office for the jailer. Rest was now absolutely necessary for Mary after those extraordinary exertions; William Penn detained her, therefore, a few days under his roof, and then conveyed her himself, in his own comfortable carriage, to the house of her friends. It is impossible to describe the joy which her return afforded,

and which was not a little increased by the presence of her illustrious companion.

The troubles and persecutions of the Pixleys here came to an end, for they went over to Pennsylvania with its distinguished founder, on his return, and became noted among the most worthy and influential of the settlers there. Mary, however, returned to England, being affluently married; and I, myself, several years ago, was possessed of a piece of needle-work said to have been of her doing.

When the children had listened thus far, Mrs. Manners took out her watch, to see what time it was; but all the young folks cried out, "Oh! it is very early yet; do let us have another story."

"It must be a short one, then, for it is not very early, my children," said she. And she turned over the leaves, and read as follows:—

BARZILLAI BUNKER AND THE THIEF.

THERE was one Barzillai Bunker, a member of the Society of Friends, residing near New Concord, in the back settlements of New Jersey. He was of wonderfully staid demeanour, and of such inflexible features that you might have doubted if he could smile; assuredly, a laugh was beyond the power of his muscles: yet Barzillai had a spice of humour in his composition, and, in a quiet way, enjoyed a joke as well as any man.

Barzillai was a farmer, and had a small location a short distance from the settlement of New Concord. It was in January, or as Friends call it, the first month in the year, 1795; and near Barzillai's abode lived one Jonas Familyman, a lazy, good-for-nothing fellow, who had taken a small tract of land, which he managed much as the sluggard managed his garden in the days of good King Solomon. The cattle of Jonas, as may be imagined, were not over-well supplied

with winter fodder; and as he was too improvident to have wherewithal to barter, and money was out of the question, after the wolves had devoured his three sheep, there seemed no other way to him of keeping life in the bodies of his three cows, than by making free with the rich haystacks of his flourishing neighbour, Barzillai Bunker. Barzillai, who would have missed a straw had it been taken, soon saw that other than his own people cut the rick, night after night. But Barzillai, if he were quicker sighted than most men, was also less communicative, and not one word did he say of his suspicions.

All this time, however, he was thinking to himself what he should do, and accordingly, having made up his mind, on sixth-day, or as it is commonly called Friday, night he took a dark lantern in his hand and seated himself under one of his ricks. Here he had not been long stationed before he perceived his neighbour Jonas quietly steal up, seat himself in a partly-cut rick, and play the cutting-knife with tenfold the agility he commonly used, on either ordinary or extraordinary occasions. Barzillai was glad to see that his neighbour had the proper use of his arms,

and could make them move when it suited his purpose.

In a short time Jonas had released a handsome truss from the stack, and heaving it upon his shoulders, quietly, and securely as he thought, marched off with his plunder, little thinking, poor man, that Barzillai was tracking his heels all the time. A merry thought meanwhile was in Barzillai's head, and he advanced upon him until they came to a lonesome piece of unreclaimed swamp which Jonas had to pass. Barzillai was concealed from sight by the burden which poor Jonas carried, and just as they were at the entrance of the frozen swamp, he took the candle from the lantern and set fire to the hay on either side, and then, extinguishing his light, slipped aside to see what would come of it. On Jonas went a few paces, unconscious of the growing conflagration at his back, till it suddenly burst forth into a wild blaze and seemed to envelope him in fire. Down, in a moment, went the blazing mass, and the poor thief stood revealed by the clear flame through the darkness. In an agony of sudden horror his hands were extended wildly forward; his hair lifted

his fragment of a hat from his head, and then after a cry, between a scream and a groan, he darted forward like a maniac, not daring to look behind him till he was totally lost in the blackness of the night.

After witnessing this spectacle, Barzillai went quietly home and to his bed. The place was so lonesome and inhabitants so few, that there was no probability of the circumstances having been witnessed, and he said not a word to any of his household of what he had done or of what he had discovered.

The next morning, poor Jonas, pale, and with his lean, melancholy figure looking yet more woe-begone, came to the house of Barzillai.

"Oh!" he exclaimed when he found himself alone with his neighbour in his comfortable parlour, "I have been a wicked wretch! I have been a thief! Good Mr. Bunker, forgive me!" and saying that, he fell upon his knees before him.

"What is it thou hast done, friend?—what is it thou wouldst have of me?" asked Barzillai, with great serenity.

"Oh, worthy, good Mr. Bunker," cried Jonas, "the

vengeance of the Almighty has pursued me. I have robbed your stacks time after time, but last night fire from heaven consumed my plunder, and it is of the Lord's mercy that I am spared!"

"Rise, my friend," said Barzillai; "thine is a strange confession."

"It is to you," cried Jonas, still on his knees, "that I must make confession, and from you I must obtain pardon, before I can implore forgiveness of Heaven! I have been a sinner all my days, Mr. Bunker; but this Providence of Mercy has redeemed me, and from last night I shall be an altered man."

All sense of joke was gone from the mind of honest Barzillai, and he too, like the poor penitent, was humbled by the sense of the Almighty's influence which had thus made him an instrument to reclaim his poor erring brother. Barzillai leaned against the rude mantelpiece of his parlour, and wept; and then taking poor Jonas by the hand, seated him beside him, freely forgave him for what he had done, and began such a conversation with him as strengthened all his good resolutions.

Jonas and Barzillai wept together—it was like the

repentant prodigal coming back to his father's house; and Barzillai lived to witness the rich and abundant fruits of the poor man's penitence, in the happy change which took place, not only in his outward circumstances, but in his whole conduct. Of course he kept secret his own share in the event of the night; he had neither wife nor child to communicate it to, and he learned to love the repentant Jonas too well to hint a word to his discredit. The whole circumstance never would have transpired had he not accidentally related it to an old friend in England, during one of his religious visits to that country.

Barzillai has long been dead, but the descendants of Jonas Familyman are a numerous and flourishing colony, in and about New Concord.

When the reading of this story was finished, Anna yawned, and even Julian appeared fatigued; Mrs. Manners found that it was very late, and the family put up the books and the portfolio, and began to prepare for bed. The evening had been passed very pleasantly, but they all declared it was not as it would have been, if "dear, old Uncle Thomas" had been there.

THE FOURTH EVENING.

The next morning, news was brought that Uncle Thomas was so much better that he had been down to breakfast, but the doctor thought it would be very wrong for him to go out that day. So, when the family were again collected together after tea, they felt somewhat more cheerfully than they did on the previous evening; but still they had no reason to suppose that Uncle Thomas would be with them.

Everything was prepared; and Augustus, who was told by his mother that he was to act as reader for the evening, had taken the damask-cushioned arm-chair, which seems to have become a kind of throne, or chair of state, or what the English call a *woolsack*, for the presiding officer, when, suddenly, a carriage drove up to the door, the bell rang, and presently, something was heard in the entry, that neither Mrs.

Manners nor the children could rightly understand. Of course they all rose, and went to inquire what it could be; and there, sure enough, was Uncle Thomas, looking very pale and weak, but very cheerful.

He was coming along the entry, putting one foot before the other very slowly, and leaning forward upon the shoulder of his favourite black servant and coachman. They helped the old man to his seat, and brought him the portfolio; for they all agreed that it was his turn to choose a picture.

Uncle Thomas soon chose a very beautiful engraving, representing two little girls, one much younger than the other, and a little boy, younger than either. They were caught in a shower, and they were all barefoot, and looked like poor children, but they seemed very happy. The older girl threw her frock over her head, instead of an umbrella, and tried to keep the rain off the others; but it would not do so; they all got a right good ducking.

"Don't you think they deserved to be well wet?" asked Uncle Thomas; "for," said he, "if you look at the younger girl, you will see that she is carrying her brother's hat under her arm, and it is full of nice ripe

pears. Let us hope that some good neighbour gave them leave to go into his orchard. If they had gone without leave, I cannot think that they would look so very cheerful, in spite of the rain. I am getting to be pretty old now, and I never knew in all my life a little boy or girl that could sleep soundly at night, if he or she had even wished to take what did not belong to them, whether they took it or not."

"But do you think they are as naughty when they only think of doing wrong, as when they do it?" inquired Anna.

"That depends on circumstances," replied Uncle Thomas; "if they struggle right hard against temptation, they deserve to be praised for their exertions, even when their thoughts are wicked; but if children will always try to avoid *thinking* wrong for a good while together, God will always help them; and then they are not so strongly tempted; and they deserve to be more happy than those who do not so constantly think of such things, and who are therefore much more likely to give way; and *I have always observed that they are so.*

"Is it not raining very hard on the poor little things?" asked Julian.

"It is a smart shower for this country," returned Uncle Thomas; "but it would be considered a mere sprinkle in countries where I have been. In many lands, the weather is steadily dry and hot for eight months in the year, and then, during four other months, it rains awfully; especially when the rainy season first commences. I remember once, in Bengal, I rode out in my palanquin to see a friend, and it happened to be just about the change of the monsoon; for, the wind in the Bay of Bengal and the countries thereabout, blows steadily one-half of the year in one direction, and the other half in the opposite direction, and the rainy season always sets in at the time of one of these changes. The day was bright and clear, and not a cloud was to be seen. I spent a few minutes only with my friend, and when I left the house, the sky was overcast. I had some idea of what was coming, and sprung quickly into the palanquin, telling the bearers to make haste home. But I had hardly gone two hundred yards, before it seemed as if the heavens were one sheet of flame, and instantly, down came the rain in torrents, every drop

looking blue, or green, or yellow, or orange, or violet, or indigo, from the reflection of the lightning, as flash after flash followed each other so rapidly as not to leave the heavens time to grow dark between them. Oh! That was a noble storm! And I am quite sure it was not five minutes before my bearers were nearly middle-deep in water in the public street. I wondered how they contrived to breathe in such a *solid* shower."

"Why, Uncle," said Augustus, "I should think that such rain as that, would wash away houses and drown the people."

"It often does a great deal of mischief," replied the old gentleman; "but, if we may judge from the petrified rain-marks we often find on rocks, the showers that must have fallen before or during the Flood, must have left even these far behind, in their excessive violence; so large and deep are the marks of the drops."

"Petrified rain-marks!" exclaimed Mrs. Manners; "dear sir, you astonish me!"

"To be sure," said Uncle Thomas; "they are very commonly observed in certain kinds of rock. We

even see the marks of the ripple of little waves that washed the shores of ponds and lakes, long before the Flood, now turned into solid stone. Then again, in many places, you may find the footprints of great birds, larger than any now living, where they wandered over the clay before it was hardened, hunting for fish and shells on the slimy shores. You need not look so incredulous, children; there is nothing so wonderful in all this! You may see the same appearances, almost any day, on the banks of a muddy mill-dam or tide-water river; only that the mud is not often hardened into stone in such places now-a-days."

"Is it ever?" asked Julian.

"Yes," returned Uncle Thomas; "I have seen just such marks, differing only in size and shape, upon what we call hardpan, which is nothing more than earth made firm—sometimes almost as hard as flint—by drying, or by certain chemical substances soaking through it and changing its nature."

"Oh, do tell us more about these strange things that happened before the Flood," cried Anna, looking up wistfully in Uncle Thomas's face.

"Not now, my dear child," said he; "I am not strong enough to talk much at present; so, suppose we ask Augustus to read us some story or essay, to pass away the time."

"And what shall I read?" asked he.

"Anything you please. Open either of those little books, and take the first story that comes, for they are all good."

So Augustus took up the nearest volume, and read this conversation, between a father and daughter, about the Chinese fighting-cricket, written by the Rev. Robert Walsh, a very learned Englishman.

THE MANTIS, OR WALKING-LEAF.

BY THE REV. ROBERT WALSH, LL.D.

D. Papa, what is this long, hard word—En-to-mo-lo-gy?

F. Entomology, my dear. It signifies a description

of insects. The word *entomos* implies the same thing in Greek as insect does in Latin,—nearly cut, or divided, into three parts, as most insects appear to be: these are the head, the thorax or breast, and the abdomen or belly. Formerly very few creatures of this tribe were described: the bee, the ant, the spider, and some others, which were found in all countries, or were made useful to man, or whose habits came every day under the notice of people, were alone attended to, and the knowledge they supplied was not sufficient to form a science. But in our time, when everything is investigated, and new and beautiful discoveries are every day made, even among beings which were considered as the meanest of God's works, the facts are so numerous and curious as to afford materials for a new department of knowledge, for which it was necessary to invent a new name; and, therefore, learned men called it Entomology.

D. And is every story I have heard of little insects true?

F. The advantage of modern science is to separate the true from the false. When the ignorant noticed anything extraordinary in such beings, they immedi-

ately supposed there was something preternatural in it, and it became the occasion of superstitious alarm. There is a small creature found in decayed furniture which makes a noise like the ticking of a timepiece. It is sometimes heard in a bed-room, and is then always considered as the forerunner of some fatal sickness in the family; and is, therefore, called a death-watch. I have known many persons who were weak enough to believe this; and I could not remove their anxiety, by showing them the little insect in the cell which it had burrowed for itself in the old wood.

D. Did you ever meet with any other of which such things were told and believed?

F. Yes; many whose habits were so extraordinary as to account for this belief, and almost to justify it.

D. Tell me what was the most curious insect you ever met with?

F. I think that called the walking-leaf, which I will describe to you. For the convenience of memory, insects are classed with respect to wings. If they have none, they are called aptera, which literally signifies without wings. If they are provided

with them, they are classed according to their number and arrangement. Some are diptera, or having two wings, like our common flies; some are neuroptera, having four wings, with nerves branching through them, like dragon-flies; some are coleoptera, having their wings covered with a case, and you cannot see them till the case is raised up, like beetles; some are lepidoptera, having four wings covered with scales, which are generally beautiful as butterflies; some are hemiptera, having the upper ones something like parchment. There are other divisions which are more complex, and which it would be tedious to enumerate here.

D. To which does the walking-leaf belong?

F. To the order hemiptera. It has four wings; the two upper membranous, or like parchment, which gives occasion to its name; the two lower folding the body. It has six legs; the front or foremost, serrated or toothed like a saw, and ending in a single nail, which seems not intended to assist the animal in walking, but to use as arms. The four hinder are properly its legs, and help it forward, though with a very awkward motion. The elytra, or cover of the

wings, is generally a bright green, fading into a brown or yellowish hue, and so nearly resembles the foliage of a plant in its stages, that it has attained for the insect the name of the walking-leaf. But that which gives it its most striking characteristic is the structure of its head. That part which, in other insects, is generally a flat, immovable breast, is in this elongated into a flexible neck; to this its head is lightly attached, so that it has the power of turning it in different directions.

D. Is there more than one kind of them?

F. O yes; the class is so numerous that it has been divided into sixty-six species, having all nearly the same characteristics; but, for convenience, they have been separated into other genera with different names. One is called the phasma, which literally means the spectre, or ghost; and there is a species of this named the giant ghost, which extends to the length of eight inches. The upper wings are small, and veined with green, like the foliage of a plant, but not so conspicuous as in other kinds; it resembles, with its legs projecting as broken branches from a stem, more

a twig than a leaf, and is, therefore, called the giant walking-stick.

D. But what is it, except their shape, that makes them such curiosities?

F. They all present not only an appearance so singular, but have habits so extraordinary, that they seem to be endued with qualities superior to almost any other animated being; and such has been the effect on vulgar and ignorant minds, that they ascribed to them powers and properties almost supernatural. There is a gravity in the motions of this insect, a wisdom in his aspect, and a sage character in the manner in which he moves his head, that has obtained for him the name of Mantis, or soothsayer, many of whose qualities are ascribed to him, and he is actually believed to possess them. He reposes deliberately on his hind legs, like an animal in a sitting posture, and then he raises one or both of his fore legs, like arms, in such a way, with the nail projecting, that he looks exactly like a human being, pointing with his finger to some object to which he directs the attention; and at one time he is supposed to be intimating a future event, and then he is called

the Diviner, and consulted, like an oracle. At another, he is thought to be pointing out the right path to a traveller; and in countries where the insect is found, particularly among the superstitious peasantry of the south of France, when a traveller loses his way, he searches among the bushes for a mantis to direct him.

D. That is very curious.

F. But he exhibits attitudes more curious still. He sometimes holds both fore-feet together, a little elevated, looking at the same time up to heaven with the most solemn aspect, and he exactly resembles a human being with his hands folded in the act of devotion. He is then called *le prie Dieu*, or the Worshipper, and looked upon in that attitude as something holy. This veneration is increased because he seems to possess the sense of hearing, and turns his head to the sound of an organ, as if he was particularly impressed with the nature of sacred music. On some occasions, when he is sought after, he suddenly contrives to elude his pursuers, and disappears. Hence he is supposed to be gifted with supernatural powers to deceive and escape from his

enemy, and he is called the Invisible. He lives for a length of time without food, light, or air, even longer than most insects, and, from this tenacity of life, he is called the Immortal. And that nothing might be wanting to add to the respect which superstition attaches to these insects, the eggs of some species are found disposed in the form of a cross, as if by this they intended to display their veneration for the sacred emblem.

D. Dear papa, did you ever see any of these things yourself?

F. From the various and curious accounts I had heard, I was very desirous to examine them in their native state, and be an eye-witness to their motions and habits. Whenever I was in a country where they are found, I always procured some, and so had an opportunity. The first place I saw one was near Ephesus, in Asia Minor. We were taken prisoners, and detained all night on the banks of a river, by a party of Turks, and they accidentally set fire with their pipes to some dry reeds and bushes which covered the ground about us. As the fire advanced, the grass and leaves seemed endued with animation,

and to be moving from it. On looking a little closer, I found what I thought was vegetable matter had really life. The humid soil and great heat of the climate had produced a vast number of insects in this place, and among them several kinds of mantis, who were disturbed by the fire, and instinctively moving from it. Their motions were very grave and deliberate. After moving a little way, they stopped and looked back, as if to see whether the fire was advancing to them, and then walked on again. I brought away with me a large one, which exactly resembled a branch with a leaf attached to each side, and I kept him a long time at the palace at Constantinople, watching his motions, which exactly resembled what I had heard of them. He sometimes held up his fore-feet, with his head raised as if in the act of prayer; and sometimes he would turn and look up to me in the same attitude, as if entreating me to let him go. I caught another on a pine tree in an island of the sea of Marmora, which was endued with the faculty of distinguishing sounds, and was attracted or repelled, as they were agreeable or disagreeable. He was standing on a table, when a lady

in the room struck a piano-forte. He started, turned his head in the direction of the sound, and astonished every one present, by actually raising and letting fall one of his fore-feet, as if beating time to the music. On another occasion I was exhibiting the insect to a friend in my apartments, and turned round to call his attention to some curious motions it was making. When I looked again, it was gone, as if, like an Irish Liperchaun, it rendered itself invisible the moment I took my eyes from it. We searched everywhere, but could find no trace of it, though it was as large as a bird. A few days after, it reappeared, and I found it clinging to the wall.

D. Did every one you met with do the same things?

F. No. They seemed to be endued with somewhat different faculties or habits in different countries. I never saw those I had in the East point out the way; but I did in the West. I one day lost my way on the side of the Corcovado mountain, in Brazil. This mountain abounds with curious and beautiful insects; and negroes are frequently sent out by their masters with gauze-nets to catch them. I met a

party, and inquired the road. One of them had caught a mantis, and motioned me to ask him. I did so, and the insect actually lifted up one of his fore-feet, and seemed to point to a path in a forest with his long, finger-like claw. The negro said "Bo," which means "good," in the imperfect Portuguese which they speak. So, I took the path, and found it the right one, which soon led me out of the wood. I know not if the negro had been taught in Africa that the insect had this faculty, or whether it was a superstition he had learned from the Portuguese.

D. But did you find them immortal? Are they yet alive?

F. Of some I can say nothing, for they disappeared, and I never could find them again. Others I deprived of life myself, in order to preserve them. But one certainly did survive a long time, under circumstances which I thought no being endued with the principle of animation could outlive. I caught one on the shores of the Black Sea, which was more curious and extraordinary in its appearance and movements than any I had before seen. I shut it up in a box, and forgot where I laid it. Several months

after, I found the box, and when I opened it, I saw the prisoner inside, as vigorous and lively as when I enclosed him. He seemed even more sage and active than any of his tribe. I kept him for nearly a year in this state of abstinence and confinement, and frequently exhibited him for the amusement of my friends. I never let him out, for fear he should become invisible, like his predecessors; but within the precincts of his prison he displayed all his extraordinary talents, and never seemed to suffer from the exclusion of air, light, or food. I sent him to an entomological friend in England as a curiosity, hoping that he would have an opportunity of exhibiting him alive in the same way; whether the voyage was as ungenial to his feelings as to other animals, and he sunk under the effects of sea-sickness, or whether the period of his natural life had arrived, I know not, but, to the best of my recollection, when my friend opened the box, on its arrival, the poor, wise, immortal mantis, was dead.

D. And are these insects really endued with any wonderful qualities?

F. On the contrary, they are a very stupid and vora-

cious creature. They devour without mercy every living insect they can master. Their propensities are so pugnacious that they frequently attack one another. They wield their fore-legs like sabres, and cleave one another down like dragoons; and, when one is dead, the rest fall on him like cannibals and devour him. This propensity the Chinese avail themselves of; they have not the veneration of Europeans for their imaginary qualities, so they use them as gamecocks, and wagers are laid on the best fighter.

D. Well, I am sorry to find the sage mantis is, after all, no wiser than other animals.

F. The first step to knowledge is to remove falsehood. In this respect we are growing wiser every day. The fables of ignorance and superstition are fast disappearing, and we have sufficient cause for admiration in the qualities that God has really given to all his creatures, without assigning to them fictitious ones of our own creation. It is the great goodness of the Deity to confer on every being such faculties as are admirably adapted to its nature: to suppose, then, that they have more than they want, would be an imputation on his wisdom.

When Augustus had finished reading the description of this very curious insect, Uncle Thomas complained of the headache, and said that he believed it would be best for him to go home. The children were very sorry; for they would have liked to ask him many questions about so strange a creature; but they all waited upon him to the door, and bid him good-by, hoping that he would be better to-morrow. He kissed little Anna, patted Julian on the head, and shook hands with Augustus; for he knew that the eldest son felt the dignity of his station very much, and thought himself very much of a man already.

As soon as the door was closed, they tripped back to the parlour, and Mrs. Manners said, "We have yet time to read another story or two, before we retire, so suppose you listen to the tale of Irish Jerry. I happened to open upon it while you were gone; and as it was written by a very kindhearted and excellent lady, who was an Irishwoman herself, and one who dearly loved her countrymen, I doubt not that it teaches some good moral. You know that it is useless to print or read anything that will not make us either wiser or better; and I am sure *she* must have

thought so; for I never saw anything written by her, even for children, without feeling happier for having seen it."—And when the young folks had all taken their places, she began.

IRISH JERRY.

"And will I get your ladyship a donkey? I'll find your honour a beauty that you shall ride. Ah, will I now? a rale beauty wid a saddle, that goes like the wind of a sunny day, smooth, and asy, and hasty."

"But, my friend, it is a goat's carriage you are driving, fit for little children only—you do not want me to get into a goat's carriage, do you?" I replied, laughing at the oddity of the boy's address, and pleased to hear on the Esplanade, at Brighton, the cheerful-sounding "brogue" of my native land.

"Why thin, my lady, Jenny's a born beauty, not altogether as one of thim big gentlemen goats wid de

long beards, and the boo-boo-boo faces! but"—and he eyed me, and then his pretty little carriage, anxious to ascertain if I could, by any possibility, get into it, and despairing, doubtless, of making the arrangement, he continued, "Ah! sure, the donkey wid a fine lady's saddle upon her would be grander; and my little brother 'ill undertake Jenny—and sure its meeself 'ill go to the world's end wid your honour upon the purtiest donkey in Brighton—I mean your ladyship on the donkey, and me after it."

"I assured the boy that I was not fond of donkey-riding, that I had my own pony, and—but he would suffer me to proceed no farther.

"Ah, lady, a pony!—Why thin, what signifies a pony? a bit of a horse! Ah, my lady, I ax yer pardon—but it's heart sorry I am to see you so pale, and there's nothing in life like the trot of a donkey to make the cheeks rosy; will I be after getting you the donkey? I'll travel England wid you—at ninepence an hour—and that's chape travelling; or maybe you'd have a spell on the say,—sure the sun's turnin' every inch of the waters into diamonds. Will I bring you a boat?"

"I suppose, my good lad, your father has a boat; and between goats, donkeys, and boats, you are all growing rich." The expression of the poor boy's countenance changed more quickly than I can write it—the smile passed from his wide lips—and the light in his full, round eye darkened.

"This dawshy boy," he replied, laying his hand on a fair-headed child, who stood ready to take charge of Jenny; "this dawshy boy, madam, is not my *born* brother, only *brother of the heart* like—the man's son who owns the boat—and, I may say, owns me too, as none has better right, seeing I never had a father at all, at all; and no good of a mother, no more than if I had been born without one—God forgive her, and mind her, living or dead, Amin! Sure it's alone I am among the people, and such a dale of 'em in it; and it's dead and buried I'd be long ago—only for this darlint's father; and sure enough the donkey is his, and the goat, and the purty boat; but as to ever growing rich! hasn't the poor man his own six children, and meeself, and the three bastes to keep?"

"What three beasts?" I inquired, interrupting my

little Paddy friend; "you only mentioned a goat and one donkey."

"And sure the greatest baste of the three *is the boat!* She costs the most of any; and, indeed, it's small luck he has wid her; she's ever and always in mischief, so she is. After not earning a shilling with these craythers all day, I turns out wid himself in the boat all night, and maybe the sun 'ill rise upon nothin' for us, but a handful of sprats, or a trifle of bigger—but not better fish."

"You work very hard."

"The harder I work, the better and the *lightsomer** I do be; the comfort I has is in the hard work, and the thought that it helps my father."

"Your father!" I exclaimed.

"I calls him father, ever since he let me," continued my new acquaintance, who, I afterwards discovered, was known by the name of IRISH JERRY. And while he spoke, he thrust his long, red fingers amongst his black and clustering curls, so as to push his furry cap quite on one side. The action altogether convinced

* Happier.

me that something particular was connected with the time when the fisherman permitted him to call him "father." An Irish boy always scratches his head when he has anything of importance to communicate; and I inquired into the mystery, with the interest I naturally feel for young folk, be they rich or poor.

"Tell the lady, Jerry, tell the lady!" exclaimed his little companion. "He never cares to tell it," continued the boy, in the prettiest of Sussex accents—so crisp and musical; "because it praises himself, though I know he is very proud indeed of it."

Jerry blushed, and pulled Jenny's ears, and rubbed the sleeve of his jacket on the brass of her harness, an operation which, it occurred to me, would rather soil the brass than improve it. Here then was a mystery, and a story,—a real, natural story, and stories I have dearly loved from the time when, a little, naughty, fat girl (I really ought to be ashamed to confess my exceeding naughtiness), I refused to go to sleep at eight o'clock, unless permitted to hold "Beauty and the Beast" in one hand, and "Cinderella" in the other. From that happy time up to the present, I have loved story, and story-books: and

I thought I should like to sit, not on one of the fine green seats on the Esplanade, because the fine ladies and gentlemen would wonder what I could hear from a poor boy, and it is very unpleasant to be stared at, but down yonder, under the Battery, on the side of that pretty painted boat, from whence, to the right, far and away, I can see the gay town of Worthing; while out into the ocean, on the left, is the pretty chain pier stretching 1134 feet into the sea,—the beautiful, wonderful sea, with its eternity of waters, upon which thousands and tens of thousands of ships have ridden, and will ride longer than I can calculate, is sleeping before me; and every ripple on its surface, to repeat poor Jerry's description, "was turned into diamonds by the sun." I seated myself on the edge of an old boat, having previously desired Jerry to follow and tell me his story. I was not a little pleased at seeing that the Irish boy's adopted brother accompanied him, and, pulling one of his yellow forelocks, so as to bow, after his fashion, said, "May I stay, ma'am?—I want Jerry, you see, ma'am, to tell the true story."

"Does *he* tell untruths?" I inquired.

"Oh, no, no, no!" he answered eagerly; "only he's shy speaking of himself." I do not exactly remember ever to have heard an imputation of possessing too much modesty cast upon either Irish boys or Irish men, and I was both interested and amused by the earnest desire expressed by the fisherman's son, that Jerry's story should be faithfully told.

"Being," commenced my new friend, "a desolate orphan (my name's Jerry Crow, at your ladyship's sarvice); being, as I may say, a *desolate orphan Crow*, without a bit to put in mee mouth,—picked up off the wreck of a herring-smack, me and a dog, this child's father had the luck of me,—what many would call bad luck; but I had no parish, being, to the best of my memory, born with the herrings (in the boat, you know, mee lady). Well, 'twas all the same, for he brought me up at his knee, and, whin I could turn mee tongue to the English, I called him FATHER.

"Well, lady dear, 'You understand, Jerry,' says he, 'I am not your father. I think as far as I can answer for it, that my own childer, my own flesh and blood, will be *brave, true,* and *honest;* but though I may tache you a dale, Jerry, yet, young as you are,

you may have larnt much bad, before you come under my taching; and I shouldn't like any child that once called me father, not to have the three qualities that carry a man best through the world.'

"Ma'am dear, when he spoke that word, my whole heart come up into my mouth, and I thought I'd have choked; but when I could spake (we lived at Shoreham then), 'As to the bravery, sir,' says I, 'pitch me against the biggest boy in Shoreham, and I'll bate the life out of him, I will, at single-stick or a fair.' 'Hush! hush!' says he, '*that's* not the bravery I mean, though a man must have bravery enough even in that way to defend himself; but I mean the bravery that makes a man stick to the truth and fear God, though it makes, maybe, against himself, to all appearance, at the time.' Well, I did not rightly understand what he meant; but I felt mighty lonely; every child in the place had a father or mother, or some one belonging to them, except me. My heart turned to this little chap, who was then a *weeny* thing that I had been taching to call me 'brother,' and now I had to settle to *untache* him; the kitten in the sun, the bird in the nest, the lamb upon the lea, had a

mother—but *I had none!* and those I loved like my heart's blood, would not let me call them by the name I loved. I thought I should have died; I couldn't eat, I couldn't sleep, I wished—it was very, very wicked—to be dead. My heart was splitting in two halves with the trouble, and, at last, hardly knowing what I meant, says I to the masther (what could I *else* call him but masther?) says I to the masther, 'Sir,' says I, 'if you plaze,' says I, 'if I prove to you that I *am brave, true,* and *honest,* in the way you wish, will you take to me then, and let me—let me call you father?'

"'God bless you, Jerry,' says he, 'to be sure I will, and proud I'd be of you too,' says he: 'but mind,' says he, 'it isn't pickin' up a fight 'ill make me think you brave; and as to the truth, indeed, I never found you out in a lie yet, which is a great dale to say, *considerin' you're Irish.*' Well, I didn't like the backhanded compliment at all on account of my country—but had no help for it; but *I made a promise to myself,* that before long I'd have a father and family for myself, somehow or other."

"Go straight on, Jerry," exclaimed his little monitor, "and don't skip."

Although Jerry's modesty might make him inclined to skip, still his story might weary in the telling, if repeated in his own strange language; for, an Irish man, woman, boy, or girl, never yet told a tale straight forward; they are fond of parentheses, and observations, and annotations, some of which *have*, and others have *not*, to do with the information they desire to give.

The kindhearted man who adopted the desolate Irish boy, had little doubt that he possessed personal courage, that he would fight well; but that was not the only courage, poor though he was, he desired for his child: and indeed, Jerry was not aware of what he really required, and believed him to be hard to please, who was not satisfied with one who would fight "the biggest boy in Shoreham."

Jerry's bravery, however, was doomed to another test. It was a misty morning, and Mark Godford, the fisherman, did not think it wise to put to sea; he dragged his boat up on the shingles, and returned home to look after his donkey, requesting a fisherman

who remained on the beach drying his nets, to prevent any boys or young children from pushing out the boat.

The fisherman attended but little to the trust reposed in him; for as the evening closed in, Jerry was sent down to draw the boat still higher on the shingles—but no boat was there! that is to say that, though many boats were on the strand, the particular one bearing Mark Godford's name had disappeared; and, to Jerry's horror, he saw his humble patron's two children (one of them my curly-headed friend), accompanied by another boy, in the boat, beyond the small breakers, which were rising in no very peaceful mood on the beach. What could be done? The men had gone home to their different dwellings, and the wind, blowing off the shore, was drifting the naughty, foolish children farther and farther out. Poor Jerry called and screamed; but the boys heard him not, and, if they had heard, had neither skill nor strength to guide the boat.

"What ails you, honey?" inquired a poor Irish shrimp-woman, who had been lingering in the water,

and now was seated under the cliff, mending her net; "What ails you?"

Jerry explained his anxiety, and requested her to assist him in getting a boat out. "That you may be all lost, is it?" she said, moving at the same time to perform his request, and seeing, even more clearly than Jerry himself, that there was no time to lose, not even time to get to the village and procure necessary assistance. "I didn't see the little fools," exclaimed the poor woman; "how could I, *barrin'* I hadn't eyes in the back of my head, which was to the wather: there now, in wid you." The kind-hearted creature was not satisfied with this little aid, but got into the boat herself, and, to Jerry's delight, helped to guide it over the breakers. He had formerly observed her assisting her husband in the same perilous task, and was well aware of the value of her kind services. But they had to encounter greater peril than they had been at all aware of; the wind increased, and, as they neared the boat, they could hear the screams of the careless children, who were totally unable to trim their little vessel, and left her to the pitiless tossing of the storm. "God preserve

us, for *He* only can!" muttered the shrimp-gatherer. "Amen, again and again!" responded Jerry. "Oh, if they would only sit still, and not keep running from one end of the craythur of a boat to the other, all would be well enough!" The woman elevated her voice, when within hearing, and commanded them to remain quiet; and Jerry commenced preparing a rope which he hoped they could fasten to the gunwale between the swells, which unhappily increased in size and quantity. "Now, my boy, now's yer time!" exclaimed the woman; and the rope was flung, caught, and in a few moments two out of three had scrambled to their preservers. But Curly-pate still remained crying and trembling, leaning first on one side, then on the other. Suddenly a tremendous wave so nearly capsized both boats, that Jerry and the shrimp-gatherer almost lost their sight, and when they looked again, the smaller vessel was upset, and, from its changed position, appeared as if towing downwards their own boat. The woman, with praiseworthy presence of mind, cut the rope; but Jerry had another object—to save poor Curly-pate, his favourite, the darling of his father's heart, his

mother's best and greatest treasure. Bravely he sprang into the dark abyss, in search of the drowning boy. The shrimp-gatherer clasped her hands more tightly on her almost useless oar, and drew her breath earnestly through her closed teeth. In less than a minute, she saw Jerry rise above the waters, bearing the lost one with him; but so much time elapsed before she could get them into the boat, that she thought Curly-pate would breathe no more. It was an awful and desperate task to guide the little bark to land;—the two boys who had been first saved crying, ready to break their hearts;—the evening quite closed in;—Master Curly still insensible;—the brave Jerry almost drowned, and the poor woman, weakened by her former exertions, contending with the waves. Still, as Jerry piously said, "*By God's great blessing* we got to land;" and that was Jerry's first triumph. Mark Godford pressed his child (rescued from a watery grave by Jerry's devoted BRAVERY) to his heart, and called him BRAVE!

"It's hard," quoth the Irish boy, as he laid his head that night upon his pillow, "It's hard," quoth he, "if I don't prove myself *true* and *honest* before long."

No knight-errant ever more eagerly desired adventure than Jerry sought for an opportunity to prove his truth and honesty. "Then," he thought to himself, "I shall no longer be without a father."

The shrimp-woman entertained a great opinion of Jerry's merits, and praised him much to her acquaintances; but the English boys looked upon him as an interloper; as one who took much from them; for Jerry's activity and good-nature were growing proverbial, and, like his country-folk, it must be confessed he was as ready to work for *love* as for *money*,—a feeling the very opposite to the English of the class to which they belonged. The prejudice against him increased to such a degree, that Jerry was perpetually getting into scrapes with the Shoreham boys, and then literally fighting his way out of them; indeed, *fighting* was the mode of reasoning he understood best; and at last his friend found it necessary to interpose his authority to prevent his *protégé* from being, as the *protégé* himself expressed it, "murdered intirely." To say the truth, I am afraid that my Irish friend did not dislike such encounters; at all events, Mark not only forbade, but wisely as well as kindly

informed the youth, that if, during a period of one month, he abstained from fighting, he should have a new suit of clothes; of this, Jerry stood much in need, and the forbearance which, during a period of three weeks, he showed on various occasions, raised bright anticipations in his good friend's mind. The old shrimp-woman knew of the intended reward, and, by averting quarrels, assisted her favourite's resolve to fight no more; the Shoreham boys thought it strange that Jerry would not fight, but they never either called or fancied him a coward. There was, however, one boy if possible more pugnacious than Jerry, a regular fighter, the plague of the neighbourhood, and alas! that such should ever be the case, the misery of his parents: he persecuted our hero most terribly; and at last, Jerry's patience could hold out no longer, and a desperate quarrel ensued. I am sorry and ashamed to recount it, but the fact was that they fought under the shadow of a cliff which they thought screened them from observation—they were mistaken. The old shrimp-gatherer knew that were another day to pass, her favourite would have his clothes, and she watched him very closely, to prevent a quarrel.

Great was her annoyance when she saw him "triumphant in battle," and his miserable jacket more torn than ever: "Ye're a bad boy, Harry Nelton; I know how you tempted him, I know all about it, how you boasted that you'd make him fight; and now he may go naked for anything you care!"

"No," replied fighting Harry; "no, Mother Irish, I'm not as bad as that either; I'll not tell—it's enough for me I've had my fight out; but I'll not hinder Jerry's getting his clothes from old Mark; I'm no tell-tale, and nobody need know it but our three selves."

"Sit down then, Jerry, till I stitch up the rents, and ould Mark will never know a word about it; and I'll go bail so far for fighting Harry, bad as he is, that when onc't he says he won't tell, he won't."

Jerry's cheek flushed and his eye brightened with indignation at the good-natured but weak-principled woman's suggestion. "You don't know me," he said, "indeed you don't: it was wrong—wicked to fight; but there stands Harry, and he knows how he provoked and dared me to it before I'd hear to it at all —and God knows that it was more to please Mark

than even to get the clothes, bad as I wanted them; but it's all over now."

"What a fool you are," exclaimed Harry; "the fight was a fair one, as I'm willing to allow, no harm done that is to signify, and no one beyond ourselves ever need to know it. Come, come, keep your own secret, and indeed you can make up for it, for I'll maintain you're brave, and never ask you to strike another blow; besides it 'ill only fret poor Mark if he hears it."

"And I saw the beautiful new castor he bought you, and the jacket, true blue, as purty as ever grew on a sheep's back, the wool I mean afore it was cloth, and all to be your own; think of that," chimed in the shrimp-gatherer.

"And sure if any one has a right to the new clothes it's you," persisted Harry, whose animosity had passed away with his blows; "you who saved his child's life."

"I will not tell a lie," responded Jerry.

"But hark ye, honey; sure never a lie need you tell; you'll be asked no questions acushla. Mark himself was bragging to me about you this mornin';

and sayin' what a jewel you war', as you are, darlint; and says he, 'I'm so sure he's kept his promise that never a question will I ask him, only put the clothes by his bedside after he's gone asleep, that he may find them in the mornin'.' "

To this bad advice Jerry made no reply, but, bursting into tears, took his way homewards, resolved to *tell the truth*. When my young readers remember that Jerry was literally in rags, they will, I hope, give him due credit for his resolution. His friend Curly-pate met him at the door, and, clinging fondly to him, whispered, "Father has got the clothes, Jerry, and we are to go to Shoreham church, and after that to dine in the boat for a holiday; and mother says she's better pleased than if she had a golden guinea that you kept a month without fighting, because now she is sure you will give it up entirely."

"Sir," said Jerry, striding up to Mark, who was seated in his easy wicker chair after a hard day's work, "Sir—I kept from fighting—till—a—while—a—go!—but then I was tempted—so, sir, I've lost the clothes!"—he covered his face with his hands,

and Mark looked as disappointed as Jerry; the old shrimp-woman had followed him home, and peering in her old wizened face, exclaimed, "Ah, thin sure, and it's myself tried hard to keep ye' from that knowledge, and couldn't; I am mad with him intirely, so I am, for telling!"

"So am not I," interrupted the fisherman: "Brave and true—another quality, and then, Jerry!"—Jerry looked up through his tears and smiled, and though the next morning saw him with a ragged jacket, his heart was cheerful. Displeased as Mark had certainly been by his fighting with Harry, still he valued, and showed he valued, his truthfulness. It was also recorded, as I afterwards learned in the village of Shoreham, that Jerry never after that day was drawn into a quarrel, "barrin," as the shrimp-woman told me, "onc't when he thrashed a big Brighton boy most soundly for cutting off a donkey's tail." My *tale* grows too long. Had I told it in the Irish boy's own words, I think it would have been more interesting. How Jerry established his character for honesty would make a story of itself: you must take

my word for it that he did so through many temptations, and perfectly to Mark's satisfaction.

"It was mighty quare," said the old Irish woman, who delighted to talk of Jerry's perfections, and was not ashamed to confess, that she learned to value truth from the lessons of a boy of fourteen; "It was mighty quare to see Jerry, when Mark not only gave him lave, after he proved himself to be brave, true, and honest,—not only gave him lave, but tould him, in the hearing of my two blessed ears (thanks be to God for the same), tould him, *he was proud to have him call him father!* First, I thought he'd never lave off the crying; every tear as big as a bean, to say nothing of a pea; then the word 'father' was never off the top of his tongue night or day; yes, father; no, father; I'm going to my father; I see my father: everything was father with him, and he as proud as a *paycock; and to be sure he had the desire of his heart, and an emperor can have no more.*"

Seldom can he have as much, I thought: to tell the truth, I was proud of the nature and feeling of my young countryman. Moreover, I learned that Mark and his family were very poor; that Jerry had

been frequently tempted to leave them by some who valued his honesty and industry, and by others who merely appreciated his usefulness; but no—nothing could induce him to desert his early friends: they were all the world to him. He worked for them, and, what was better still, he *thought* for them. Old Mark told me "he was the best of his children!" and Jerry's eyes filled with tears on receiving the compliment. I am happy to say that the circumstances of this worthy family are improving, which they cannot fail to do when people on whom worldly prosperity is bestowed become acquainted with the virtues of Irish Jerry.

Mrs. Manners was just beginning to tell her children how much more honoured such a grateful, truthful boy as Jerry always is,—though he may be so poor as to be dressed in rags,—than those naughty children, whom we often see, grumbling, and cross, and disobedient, telling all manner of untruths to shield themselves from blame, when they have done wrong; when Anna cried out, with a shrill scream, "Oh! what is that?"

There was something so very terrible in the sound of her voice that even her brothers were very much frightened; and her mother was astonished to see her look deadly pale, as if she was about to faint.

"What in the world is the meaning of this, Anna? What can have alarmed you so?" inquired Mrs. Manners.

"Did you not see that great black thing rolling over the floor? The door opened of itself, and it went out into the entry!" whispered the child trembling as if in an ague fit.

"What did you think it was? did it look like a ghost?" asked Augustus, with something very like a sneer; for he had thought something important should have occurred to warrant so much alarm.

"My child," said the mother, very seriously, "never let me hear you trifling with the fears of your little sister; you know not how dangerous the effects may be. Children are sometimes frightened into fits, and sometimes lose their reason by such folly, or rather, wickedness. Come, Anna, if you really saw anything singular, let us go and examine what it is; that is the best way to get rid of ideal fears."

Mrs. Manners took Anna by the hand, and led her into the hall, while Julian and Augustus followed. The hall was dark; for, at that very moment, the gas in the tubes became suddenly obstructed, and the lights burned dim and blue. Little Anna clung closer and closer to her mother, as they walked towards the kitchen and the cellar door, behind the stairway; she trembled once more, when she perceived, in the far corner, something that looked darker than the darkness; and when she suddenly beheld two great glaring eyes, looking like balls of green and yellow fire, fearfully lighted up in the deep shadow, another scream louder than before, rang along the passage, and, at the same moment, the mother received a blow from some heavy body upon the shoulder, and felt a sharp pang on the instant, at the point of contact. Immediately, as if by magic, the gas-lights brightened up, and on turning round, the hideous black demon, with burning eyes, was seen busily engaged at the other end of the hall, trying to find a passage through the crack of the front door, in the shape of their next neighbour's great black cat!

All the company laughed heartily at this scene,

except little Anna, but she, looking very earnestly in her mother's face, inquired, "Do you not believe that there are such things as real ghosts, sometimes, mamma?"

"No, my child," replied Mrs. Manners; "and I am distressed to find how impossible it is to prevent children from hearing of such things. All those wonderful stories which nursery-maids and old women in the country are so fond of telling, are easily accounted for upon ordinary principles. What a fine ghost the gasometer spoiled, by getting over its lameness just as it did, and showing us Mr. Thomas Grimalkin, who has doubtless been paying a friendly call on Mrs. Catherine Pussy, in the kitchen, and fled into the parlour, on seeing the cook coming suddenly down the back stairs; for Thomas well knows that Sally has a strong prejudice against all his kind. To show you how easy it is to be frightened into believing in supernatural apparitions, if you will all take your seats, I will read you a regular ghost-story, before we retire." And she read one as follows.

A GHOST STORY.

Mrs. Norton, with her two children, had stayed later at the vicarage than usual, looking over a fine collection of engravings, which the vicar's son had sent home from London; when, suddenly recollecting the hour of the night, she snatched up her work-bag, and, bidding her friends a hasty good-night, set off with George and Ellen to cross the churchyard which lay between the vicarage and their own house. The moon was shining full and bright upon the long grass and the white grave-stones; and the shadow on the north side of the church looked so deep and dark, that Ellen grasped her mother's hand, and thought how pleasant it was that their path did not lead them round that way.

The party had not proceeded many yards before Mrs. Norton recollected that they had forgotten to take away the large portfolio, which the vicar had kindly offered to lend them, in order that they might see the engravings by daylight; and she seated her-

self upon a stone slab, raised above the tomb of a shipwrecked mariner, while her children ran back to the house. They soon appeared again, bringing the large portfolio between them, and having laid upon it their mother's green cloak, which in her haste she had left behind, it struck Mrs. Norton how very much their appearance resembled that of two persons carrying a bier with a dead body stretched upon it, and she thought how many foolish fears and strange superstitions had probably arisen from circumstances quite as simple and natural as this.

The portfolio was very heavy, and the children had carried it so awkwardly as to make the most of the weight, so that by the time they reached the tomb where their mother was seated, they felt disposed to rest themselves; and George, thinking he could carry it more easily alone, set it up edgewise on the slab of the tomb. While he was endeavouring to adjust it under his arm, he bungled so that the great portfolio fell flat down upon the stone, with a noise which, in that still place and at that late hour, sounded very loud and startling. At last, however, he managed to place his burden more conveniently, and marched

away with it, Ellen walking close by his side to assist in case of accident; while Mrs. Norton, who, being dressed in white muslin, had felt rather cold while sitting on the grave, threw her cloak over her shoulders, wrapped it closely round her, and followed her children home.

Shortly after this visit to the vicarage, Ellen seemed to lose all relish for going there in an evening, an indulgence of which she used once to be so fond; and George, though for some time annoyed by his sister's anxiety to leave early, at last seemed to feel exactly as she did about it: while Mrs. Norton was quite at a loss to understand the change which had taken place in her children's tastes; for the difficulty with her had formerly been how to get them away in any reasonable time. In vain she questioned them about the reason of this change. They only looked at each other, as if they both knew very well, but were unwilling to explain it.

It happened, at the following Christmas, that Mrs. Norton had invited a large party of young people to stay with her; and, finding that they were all extremely fond of spending their evenings in telling

foolish stories about ghosts, though some of them suffered so much from it that they were afraid to go upstairs alone, she determined to introduce a conversation that might convince them of the absurdity of indulging such notions. Her daughter Ellen, however, appeared to be quite fortified against all her reasoning, and asked her mother plainly if she meant to declare that there were no such things as ghosts.

"I am not so presumptuous," replied Mrs. Norton, "as to pronounce what may or may not be possible, in a creation where I see so much that I am too ignorant to understand; but if by ghosts you mean those strange figures, sometimes white and sometimes black, which are said by young people to have been seen by their nurses and grandmothers, I must own that I do not believe in them, because I never yet heard a description of any such appearance, that I did not feel convinced it might easily have been accounted for by natural means. But if you, or any of your young friends, will relate to me a ghost story which cannot be accounted for in any such way, I will engage to lay aside my incredulity, and be made a convert to your belief."

Ellen looked very much pleased to hear her mother say this, and many expressive glances were exchanged amongst the deeply interested group, who appeared to have their minds charged with some very weighty matter. At last, movements were made indicating the wish of the party that Ellen should speak for them, and without any doubt that her mother would, in the end, be compelled to believe, Ellen began; first requiring that she should be heard in silence till her story was concluded, to which her mother willingly consented.

"It was during the last illness of poor Isabel Grey," said Ellen (after taking a conspicuous place in front of the fire, and in the very centre of the listening circle), "when nurse Witherington had been waiting upon her many weeks, that her sister, the miller's wife, was called in, everybody thinking she must be near her death. Her breathing grew worse and worse, and she wandered very much in her mind, often talking about her brother who was shipwrecked; and pointing with her long, thin finger towards the window, as they thought, in the direction of his grave, which stands next to the narrow path, and has

a broad slab upon it. Well, it was one night, after she had been rambling in this way, that she fell into a kind of uneasy sleep; and nurse Witherington and the miller's wife sat watching her a long time, until one of them, happening to turn to the window, and seeing it was a fine, clear moonlight night, they both rose up silently, and looked out upon the churchyard. Poor Isabel Grey still continued sleeping very uneasily, starting, and sometimes moaning as if she was in her last agony; but they were glad that she slept at all, and, therefore, did not disturb her, but stood quite still, looking out of the window for a long time. Nurse thinks it was just midnight, but the miller's wife says it was only eleven o'clock; however that may be, they are both quite sure it was very late, although the moon shone so clearly that they could see almost as well as at noonday. They had been looking out upon the churchyard, and upon the graves, nurse thinks about ten minutes, when they saw a tall white figure glide slowly on towards the mariner's grave, and seat itself upon the stone slab. They both saw it as distinctly as they saw each

other, and exchanged glances, but said not a word. They then turned and saw it again; and, although they looked often at each other, they always saw the white figure when they looked back again to the churchyard. At last something dark appeared moving slowly along the path. It came up towards the tall white figure, which then rose, and they saw that two men were carrying between them a bier with a dead body extended upon it. As soon as they reached the grave, the stone slab was lifted up, and they saw it broad and white in the moonlight. It then fell with a tremendous noise, like thunder, while the two men walked away, and the white figure at that moment vanished. In none of these facts could they possibly be mistaken, because they were both looking directly at the same objects. It took some time before all was finished, and in this time they often turned to each other, as much as to say, 'Do you see that?' but they neither of them had the heart to speak. The most remarkable circumstance, however, is yet to be told. The following night, exactly at the same hour, nay, at the same moment, poor Isabel Grey, who had been growing rapidly worse, breathed her last. Nay,

mamma, do not smile. It was exactly at the same hour indeed. They both say it was."

"I will reply to the last part of your story first," said Mrs. Norton, who really could not help smiling. "By your own confession, Nurse Witherington said the ghost appeared at midnight, and the miller's wife that it appeared at eleven; but they both declare that the poor young woman died at the same hour, nay, at the same minute."

Ellen hung down her head, and had nothing to say to this mistake; but she felt not the less sure that the rest of her story was literally correct, and she ventured at last to hint her belief that her mamma would find it so.

"As to its literal correctness, my dear," replied Mrs. Norton, "I have not much to say against it, except that your historians have given to a solid substance the character of a ghost, and to another substance much less solid, that of a dead body. No sooner had you mentioned the tall white figure seated on the mariner's tomb, than I recollected that on the night previous to that Isabel Grey died, I was myself seated there, between the hours of ten and eleven;

and I recollect this circumstance more distinctly because of some reflections which passed through my mind at the time, relative to the man upon whose grave I was resting, and his sister, whom I then supposed to be at the point of death."

"But the two men with the bier!" exclaimed Ellen, thinking her mother would be quite at a loss how to account for them.

"The men with the bier," replied her mother, "were no other than your brother George and yourself, carrying the large portfolio with my cloak upon it, which I well remember thinking, at the time, resembled a bier and a dead body."

"But you know," resumed Ellen, "the slab of the tomb was lifted up, and fell down again with a noise like thunder."

"I know that your brother George lifted up the portfolio so that the moon shone on its broad side, and then carelessly let it fall upon the stone, with a noise which the fears of those superstitious women were likely to make them think as loud as thunder."

Ellen now began to smile, but suddenly recollecting that there was one thing yet unaccounted

for, exclaimed, "But the vanishing of the ghost, mamma!"

"You know," replied Mrs. Norton, "that I was dressed in white; but, as you had kindly brought me my cloak, I wrapped it round me when I rose up from my cold seat, and the cloak being dark green, it was very likely I should not be so easily seen as before; nay, that I should become totally invisible to those whose minds were filled with notions of the mysterious appearing and disappearing of ghosts."

The whole party now thought it best to give the matter up, and, laughing heartily, acknowledged that Mrs. Norton had quite spoiled the best authenticated ghost story they had ever heard.

"And since you have to thank me," said she, "for again being able to walk without fear through the churchyard,—yes, even close past the mariner's tomb, I must request, in return, that you will spoil this story by accounting for the ghost as I have done, wherever you find it has obtained belief. Before we part this night, let me impress upon your mind a piece of very important advice,—that in hearing, believing, or reporting any circumstance, you should

remember that, to support the prejudices or confirm the notions of an individual, is not an object worthy of your endeavours; but that the pursuit and the discovery of truth is the grand object for which our faculties were given us; that to listen to the truth ought to be the desire of all rational beings; that to believe the truth is the surest proof that we are rational; and that to make the truth known to others is one of the first and highest duties which we are capable of fulfilling.

As soon as Mrs. Manners had concluded she glanced at her watch, and said, "I find it is quite bed-time; so, make your preparations as quickly as possible, and we will retire, I hope, too much enlightened by the black cat and the grave-yard antics, to allow our slumbers to be disturbed by ghosts, to-night, at least." And the little party immediately separated with smiling faces.

THE FIFTH EVENING.

On the fifth and last evening, Uncle Thomas came earlier than usual; for, he came to tea: and there was a great deal of pleasant conversation, and many interesting anecdotes were told, before the family removed to the parlour and took their places round the centre-table. Uncle Thomas said the doctor would not let him talk a great deal, for he thought it would hurt him—and he requested Julian to act as reader for the evening.

"It is mother's turn now to choose the picture—she has never chosen one yet," said Anna.

"Well; bring me the portfolio, and I will try," replied the mother; for Charlie was upon her lap, and she could not rise without disturbing him. The poor little fellow had begged hard for permission to sit up all the evening, because it was Uncle Thomas's last night for that year.

When the portfolio was brought, she looked through it for a few minutes, smilingly; then, suddenly, her countenance became sad, and she gazed at one of the pictures for more than a minute in perfect silence. Little Charlie, in his childish restlessness, slipped down from her lap, and stood at her knee, with one arm interlocked with his mother's; and just then, Mrs. Manners raised the picture, and handed it to Uncle Thomas, while a tear glistened in her eye, and a gentle sigh was heard stealing from her lips. Look at the picture, my young readers, and see if you cannot find out the reason of the sigh and the tear. Uncle Thomas knew the reason very well, and he hardly knew what to do or say; for he felt that she was thinking of his friend, her husband, and the father of these darling children—thinking, perhaps, how cold the deep snow lay upon his bosom, in the bleak churchyard, and how much more coldly the snows of widowhood had settled on her heart. At last, Uncle Thomas called Anna to him, and said, "My darling, look at this picture. Is it not like mother,—your mother,—and dear, little Charlie?" for, curiously enough, the artist had represented the

widow and her son, in the same attitude which the living group had just assumed.

"Oh, no! It is not like them, at all," said Anna; "mother does not wear caps, nor black, any more, and Charlie is too proud to wear an apron, except at his meals, as that little boy does. Besides, mother is rich, and these people seem to be poor. Is it not very bad to be a widow, and poor too?"

"Indeed it must be so," replied the mother; "how thankful I ought to be, that my afflictions are so much less severe than those of many I have seen and known. I think I should be almost driven to despair, if the evils of poverty were added to my lot:—how could I endure to see little Charlie wearing away with want, and I not able to help him! How could I endure to leave him to the cold charities of the world, if I should happen to be taken too?

"Providence is kind to the widow and the orphan, and when they are really deserving, is almost sure to open a way for them. This I have often observed, even when things seemed at the darkest. Let me read you a very pleasant little story, of an orphan boy, and the way in which he rose from poverty to

comfort, by good conduct and industry." And Mrs. Manners read this very pretty tale.

THE DONKEY-BOY AND THE DOG-ROSE.

Do you know, my dear young friends,—even from your dictionaries you probably do, as well as from the frequent allusions of older persons—that there was once in fashion a science called "physiognomy," by which its inventor (a Swiss physician named Lavater), and his followers, among whom, I believe, we may all more or less be reckoned, professed to discover the characters of individuals from the features and expression of the face? And are you aware, that to this somewhat exploded theory has succeeded, in our times, another styled "phrenology," exemplified, I dare say, to yourselves, sometimes, by the gentleman at whose knee you stand thumbing your little heads all over, according to which many think they ascertain, by the bumps raised by nature

(not falls or fisty-cuffs) on the tender skull, what sort of persons you will all turn out in after-life, and what sort of lessons you will take most kindly to in the mean time?

But there is a third sort of divination, or fortune-telling, not only more amiable, but infinitely surer and safer than the ones I have mentioned; in which my grand-aunt, one of the best and cleverest of women, professed herself an adept: and that is, the guessing at, or rather forming an entire character out of the glimpses afforded by slight, and to many persons insignificant *traits*. My aunt, it is true, was not infallible; she had no window, to be sure, that looked *directly* into that dark chamber, the heart, but she was seldom wrong in it: and that you may be aware how favours worth having may be sometimes won by trifling marks of a good heart (as I am sure you all are among yourselves, how easily it may be lost by even slight tokens of a bad one), I shall tell you, as she has often told me, the story of the Donkey-Boy and the Dog-Rose. These are not fine materials to found a tale upon: yet, from nothing more exalted than the former, or more rare than the latter, sprung the

whole train of grateful prosperity on the one hand, and gratified benevolence on the other, which forms the subject of the following pages.

My aunt, a widow lady of large fortune and influence, was walking late on a summer evening in the neighbourhood of a beautiful village in the Isle of Wight. Her sympathy for everything that lived and had a capacity for enjoyment, and more especially for those creatures to whom it was a rare luxury, led her to pause, and even turn back a few steps in the pretty lane along which she was sauntering, to share the delight with which a couple of donkeys (after either standing all day in the sun in the dusty town, or being hard ridden and well thumped by reckless little visiters to the place) were returning to their pasture, and one of them to her colt, whose impatient bray at her approach was, no doubt, music to the mother's ears.

The animals were ridden afield by two little boys, to whose parents they probably belonged, as they were furnished with a key to the carefully locked gate of the paddock, which, after having turned in their happy beasts, they endeavoured (with an atten-

tion that betokened creditable bringing up) to fasten again. But the rusty key refused to move in the coarse, ponderous padlock, which (the gate being a very high one) swung far above the little urchin, who forgot that, when he had unlocked it so cleverly, he was exalted on the back of the now far distant donkey. In vain did he clamber even to the top of the gate itself; the more he twisted and turned at the unlucky key, the more stubborn did it seem to grow.

My aunt was not one to see childhood in distress, even of this trifling sort, without stepping in to remove it. One turn of her hand, exerted from the proper position, on a *level* with the refractory lock, settled the matter at once; and released the boys from all further cares for the evening.

Now, most children, and many good children too, in a far higher rank of life than these poor donkey-boys, and older too—for the eldest seemed hardly eight — would have been quite content with the "thankye, ma'am," and pull of his little ragged cap, with which the party *most* obliged got over his obligation to my good aunt and ran off to his sport. But to her surprise—and she was not ashamed to own, her

delight—his little companion, a year younger (and hardly looking, as he was, seven years old), turned back from following his brother, and shyly but yet confidingly looked up in her face and offered her a white brier-rose he held in his hand.

Now, it was not only the first of the season (at least, my aunt, who loved them, had been searching the hedges in vain), brilliant and new-blown, without a speck of dust on its snowy petals or deep green glossy leaves, but evidently dear to its little owner's heart and fancy; and it was *that* which, with the grateful feeling evinced by parting with it, as well as the pretty manner of the action itself, gave it its value in my aunt's discerning eyes. Her divining faculty was immediately at work, and told her—how could a dog-rose say so much, and that in five minutes? —that in the little sickly bud of humanity before her lay folded up the precious elements of gratitude, and taste, and feeling:—gratitude to acknowledge and requite even a trifling favour; taste to select and value an elegant but simple flower; feeling to discern that it would be equally appreciated by another; and,

above all, that most winning of human qualities, disinterestedness, in giving his pet rose away.

All this passed quickly, as everything did, from my kind aunt's head to her heart. Indeed, I rather think that, in this instance, the sagacity was of the heart altogether; and she not only followed the boys with her eye up the lane to a very small cottage at its further end (whose cleanly appearance and show of flowers she had often remarked), but walked off herself after them, to see what pretext she could make for learning something more about the family.

They, however, so far outran her (my aunt was on the shady side of fifty), that before she reached the cottage the eldest was riding on the gate, for which his late clamber had probably inspired him with a relish; while the youngest (young enough, she perceived, to be yet wearing a pinafore), who had his *love-of-flower-itiveness* "finely developed," was helping his mother to water her pinks and other plants.

"Your son seems fond of flowers, I think," said my aunt to the pale, mild-looking woman, with *widow* written as plainly on her face as her cap; "and a judge

of them, too; for this rose he has just given me might sit for its picture any day, it is so perfect."

The widow coloured, just about as faintly and prettily as the fading "May" bush under which she was standing, and said, "Jem takes after one that's gone, my lady; his father was a gardener;" and the poor woman brushed her eyes with the corner of her little boy's pinafore.

"And you would like to be one too, I dare say," said my aunt, stooping over Jem to give his mother time to recover herself. The child only blushed, the same pale tint as his mother; and she answered for him, "*That* he would, my lady! he's just wild for it. From the cradle, he liked roses better than rattles, and put down his little face to smell them long before he could speak; and now, you see, he'd rather help me water than ride or play with Bill."

"There may be more than love of flowers in that," thought my aunt. "Love to his mother may have something to do with it, and, perhaps, love to his father's memory, too—who knows?"

"And do you think to make a gardener of him?" asked she, to draw out further particulars.

"No, please your ladyship," said the mother, firmly, yet reluctantly, glancing at Jem as if sorry to blight the hope she knew was at his young heart. "He that's gone warned me against it. 'No lone woman,' says he to me, poor fellow! 'can afford to breed a son a gardener now-a-days; for even if one could scrape the 'prentice fee (and it's a mortal high one), they won't take little boys now, as they used to do, but must have great lads that can dig as well as learn;' so that poor Jem there (who's like to be smally) couldn't hope to do for me or himself even for ten good years to come. Now, Master Thorpe, the shoemaker in town, says he'll take him, for poor James's sake and mine, for nothing, and give him a bite and sup with his own to save him coming home to dinner with me."

"A lover of roses—one of Nature's florists—to be bred a town shoemaker!" thought my aunt; and poor Robert Bloomfield, the poet, of whom you must all have heard, sat in imagination before her—creating a world of beauty for himself and others in a dingy garret, among rude, unpoetical journeymen! But, though she blessed God in her heart for endowing

him with this possibility of mental enjoyment in despite of physical obstacles, and recollected that among the most successful of our florists are the mechanics of smoky Sheffield and Manchester, she yet felt inclined to save Jem the struggle between his nature and destined vocation.

The boy who weeded the grounds at her beautiful place in Hampshire had been lately transferred to *his* natural element, the stable,—his bent for which was testified by breaking the shrubbery for whips, and bestriding every ridable and unridable animal in the parish. And here seemed a present opening, at least, for Jem, if his mother would let him go so far, on the mere chance (if deserved) of future favour; for my aunt, kind and warm-hearted as she was, had not romance enough in her to adopt a *protégé* for life on the testimony of one brier-rose.

"My good woman," said she, "I am a widow myself, and can feel for such; and, having no children of my own, am the more disposed to help those of others. If you will trust me with Jem to S—— (only across the water, you know), he shall weed the grounds under my gardener, till he is big enough to

go to his trade, and perhaps longer, if he behaves as so kind a mother's son ought to do. He shall have decent clothes to work in, schooling after work-hours, and good wholesome food to strengthen him for whatever may be his lot in life. Remember, I promise no more, and even this will depend on his own good behaviour."

The poor woman was overjoyed, of course; for, like little Jem, she was not selfish; and the thought of her boy's present gratification and possible future welfare far outweighed, in her mind, the pain of parting from him. Some boys would have made their best bow to the lady—even Bill would have tugged his cap and said, "Thank ye!" But Jem's feelings lay always too deep for words; and, having no rose in his hand to convey them by to a stranger, he sidled up to his mother, hid his face in her apron, and began to cry. "Oh! Jem, Jem!" cried the mortified woman, "how can you make such a return to so kind a lady?"

"I like him all the better for it," said my aunt; "joy and grief both at once are too big for his little heart; and I should be sorry he left his mother with

dry eyes. But, by Monday, when my servants leave this to go home before me, Jem will step with a lightened heart into the boat with them; and by evening he will see flowers enough to reconcile him to S——, not to mention old Wilks, the gardener, who is a friend to industrious little boys."

To shorten a long story, Jem arrived safe at S——; and if he cried for grief to leave his mother, he cried again for joy when he first saw the beautiful garden in which he was to live all day long. By the time Mrs. S—— got home (which, having visits to pay, was not for a month, though her directions about Jem had been minutely attended to), Wilks reported that the little island boy was the steadiest at a job of weeding of any chap of his years he ever saw. "He does it, ma'am, as if he loved it—as if his heart was in the business."

"That is just the case, Wilks," said my aunt; and she told him the story of his brother gardener's orphan boy, and his strong wish to be a gardener, like his father.

"It shan't be my fault, ma'am, if we don't make him one," said the good-natured Wilks, whose soul

was in his profession also; "he takes to it mighty natural for such a hop o' my thumb as he is!"

But a hop o' my thumb (thanks to fine air, gentle exercise, and wholesome food), Jem did not long remain; for he grew and throve under them as a plant that has languished in a poor, ungenial soil expands, when brought into one adapted to its nature. Many were the suits of neat drab working-clothes which Jem had outgrown before the time came when, being too old for a weeding-boy any longer, his kind mistress asked Wilks, before him, whether his conduct and docility had been such as to justify her in keeping him as an apprentice and future journeyman, instead of making shoes in a garret—his only alternative.

It would be hard to say whether, at this last supposition, the tears sprung fastest to the eye of the boy, (by whom it had long been lost sight of in brighter anticipations), or that of the old gardener himself, over whom the prospect of being prematurely invalided by rheumatism had for some time been impending with cruel certainty. "Keep him, by all means, ma'am," said he, warmly; "I'd rather trust him now, child as

he is, to lay a lot of carnations, or pot a few tender cuttings, when my back won't let me stoop to it, than either of the two hulking lads, who eat twice as much victuals, and have journeymen's wages besides!"

And a journeyman in due time Jem became, too; requiting the old gardener's protection in the way most congenial to his grateful disposition, by being literally "feet to the lame," and enabling his old teacher, by the skill and care with which he executed his orders, to retain his valuable place some years longer than would otherwise have been the case. And when at length the faithful servant, yielding to age as well as infirmity, was with his own consent pensioned off, he resigned his beloved garden to his youthful deputy, not only without repining, but with a secret pride in the superior skill and ability of his pupil and successor.

The first thing Jem did on being installed in the pretty garden-house, whose roses he had tied up so many years before he dreamed they could ever be his, was to fetch his mother to inhabit it with him. Bill's settlement in life had just left her alone in her own humble dwelling; and Jem, from whom, at every

annual visit, she had felt it more painful to part, carried her off in as much triumph (the old neighbours said) "as if the dear old woman had been a bride." "And no bride," thought he to himself, "shall I ever carry home who would wish it otherwise!"

His good mistress, I am sure, did not. She knew that dutiful sons not only make kind husbands, but faithful servants also.

The fidelity of Jem was soon put to a trial very different from those to which all in his station are liable. Not only would he have scorned to wrong his employer by selling or giving away (as many gardeners do) what was not his to bestow; not only would he prevent any one else from wronging her, at the risk of all the ill-will it might draw down upon him, but he really shewed himself ready, which is not often necessary for servants in modern times, to hazard his life for his benefactress.

Civilized as these times are called, and in some respects are, many of you, my young friends, are quite old enough to remember the rick-burnings and other sad doings by which ignorant and misled people, a very few years ago, outraged Providence and

destroyed their own means of subsistence, while they madly injured the property, and sometimes lives of others.

My aunt's house, in consequence of the partiality of her late husband for agricultural pursuits, was more nearly attached than is usual in country-seats to the farm-offices; and as these were again surrounded by huge ricks of corn and hay, Jem, during the fires, could get no sleep at night, thinking of the danger his dear lady would run should the bands of incendiaries (who seemed in their blind rage to spare neither friend nor foe) make their way to her premises. If *they* could lose sight (as was then too often the case) of her many benefits, Jem could not. Gratitude was still, as at seven years old, the prevailing sentiment in his breast; and for nights together, after all the toils of the day, did he keep guard (unknown to all but his approving mother, whose prayers, you may believe, went with him to his midnight watch), through all the long, dark hours, with his loaded sparrow-gun, over his mistress's valuable farm-yard, and yet more precious person.

And was he not rewarded, think you, my young

friends, when (having succeeded in apprehending, after a desperate scuffle, one of the ringleaders, in the very act of setting fire to the wood-stack in the court-yard, *behind his lady's dressing-room*), the cuts he received in the struggle, from a scythe-blade the ruffian carried, were first carefully dressed by her own hands; and when, some days later, at the trial, he was told by the judges on the bench, that they scarce knew which most to admire, his veracity in the witness-box, or his courage in the fray?

"*I* could have told them," said my aunt, who was in court, "it was his *gratitude* which I thought most of."

Jem loved her gratefully to the close of her life—followed her reverentially to the grave—served her successor, for her sake, with equal fidelity—and brought up a fine flock of children in hereditary devotion to her memory.

The children all agreed, that this story went to show that if little boys would be kind, and good, and obliging, Providence was sure to open some way for them to get along in the world. But Mrs. Manners

remarked, that she thought the case was much harder with poor widows than with poor children. "What is a woman to do," said she, "after she has been leaning upon the arm of a protector, perhaps, for forty years, she never having been taught any useful employment, except to take care of a house;—what is she to do, if, as may happen to any one, that protector is reduced from wealth or from comfort, by want of employment or failure in business? She must part with her dear children, for their own sake, and live on, a burden to her friends, or starve;—from the bottom of my soul, I pity such!"

"They are much to be pitied indeed," replied Uncle Thomas; "but let us not charge upon Providence the wilful errors of fashion and custom! It is one of the great follies of society that either men or women are brought up without being taught any useful employment. I have often observed that people who are not taught the use of their hands, never properly develope their brains, however learned and apparently wise they may become. They never think straightly. But, when people have used their powers rightly, however humble and poor they may

be,—when they look beforehand, and are industrious, as opportunity offers,—they are sure to be helped. Suppose you send poor Charlie to bed; for the sweet little fellow is coiled up asleep on the hearth-rug, like a lap-dog; and I will then give a story in point, to Augustus, which he may read to the company."

Charlie was accordingly removed, and the story proceeded.

THE GRANDMOTHER.

CHILD.—"And when the house was burnt down, grandmother, what did you do then?"

GRANDMOTHER.—"Took shelter in the barn, and were right thankful that our lives were spared, and that a roof was left to shelter us."

CHILD.—"But all the furniture was burnt and the beds; and grandfather's leg was broken?"

GRANDMOTHER.—"But there was plenty of good clean straw in the barn; and one neighbour lent us a

mattress, and another a blanket; and one brought us a chair, and another a table; many a one spared us a pan or a kettle, a candlestick, or an earthen pot, till we could get together two or three things of our own: it was, besides, a special fine season; and even in those misfortunes we had much to be thankful for."

CHILD.—"But grandfather could not work; and there were five children; and there was the doctor to pay; and the house to build up again."

GRANDMOTHER.—"Sure enough! yet after the first shock of the misfortune, we did better than one might have thought. Thank God! at that time I was not an ailing woman; I was able to work, and everybody was ready to give me a job. Your grandfather, through the blessing of Heaven, soon began to mend; and, saving that he never had the right use of his leg again, was not much worse for his accident: I was soon able to leave him to the care of the three biggest children, and to go out washing and doing daily work as usual; and many were the times I brought home more than a day's wages, for everybody was kind to us;—the farmers' wives often sent us a little bag of meal, or a bit of bacon, or a pitcher of

milk; and the butcher sent us a Sunday's dinner, for seven weeks—all the time your grandfather was, as one may say, helpless."

CHILD.—"And then the children had the small-pox?"

GRANDMOTHER.—"But, by the time they were all down, your grandfather was well enough, though he could not work, to take care of them, as they lay on the straw he had just risen from. He was a kind, handy man, and the children all did well, which was a great mercy, seeing what a frightful malady it was, and how many died, among the neighbours' children, that same season: then, before winter set in, what with twenty pounds the squire lent us, and by making over a bit of common allotment that had come to us, and with the help of our neighbours, we got the house raised, and the roof on before the hard weather set in."

CHILD.—"But it was then, grandmother, that you got the rheumatism so bad, and that makes you always so lame?"

GRANDMOTHER.—"Ay, to be sure; we got into the house before the walls were well dry, and I fell ill of

a rheumatic fever that kept me down fourteen weeks; but by that time the children were all well again, and your grandfather could begin to work."

CHILD.—"But he could not dig as he used to do?"

GRANDMOTHER.—"Why, no; he took to weaving; and though at first, to be sure, seeing it was a new trade in his fingers, he could not get much, yet there's nothing a man cannot do if he's bent on doing it, nor a woman either; so before the spring was over, he got full journeyman's wages, and then, soon after, in a year or two, or so, as it happened, poor old John Muge died; why, he fell into his business as pat as could be; and weaving was a good trade then. There was not a farmer's wife in all the country but had a wheel going, maybe two or three, and there was a power of yarn spun, both of linen and woollen, which it was soon thought nobody could weave into cloth like your grandfather. I'll warrant ye there's bed and table linen of his weaving in every decent family twenty miles round, though it's twenty years since he died, poor man!—ay, and

his weaving will be remembered through this generation."

CHILD.—"And that was the way grandfather came to be a weaver?"

GRANDMOTHER.—"That it was! And it was a good day's work for him when he first took the shuttle between his fingers. We got our debts paid off before three years were over, and then we were able to lay something by for our children, or, maybe, help a poor neighbour.

"But now finish the chapter; you left off where the prophet sat by the brook Cherith, and the ravens fed him."

CHILD.—"I will, grandmother."

After finishing "The Grandmother," Augustus remarked, that, interesting as the Christmas evenings had been, they would have been far more so, if Uncle Thomas had been able to tell some of his own stories about animals, for they were better than anything printed in books. And Uncle Thomas replied that he was very sorry that his sickness should have lessened their pleasures, but that he would do as well

as he could, now that he felt somewhat better, by reading one very curious story, himself. It was about a dog, and he had no doubt it would please them much. So he took up a book and began.

THE CHURCHGOING DOG.

MANY persons think that dogs, however sagacious, have no notion of the recurrence of periods of time, unless they are guided by external signs; as, for instance, the return of the Sunday by the cessation of the week's labour. But there was once a dog which was guided by something more than this in calculating time; and of him I will give an anecdote. He was a white terrier of a good race, and his name was Pry; and though active and clever in the pursuit of vermin, not remarkably gifted with any great intellectual powers. He belonged to a family of the Society of Friends, who lived in a country place, and who were in the habit of attending their meeting—

— their week-day meeting, as they called it — on the Thursday, some two miles off, in a lonely and rather wild place. Pry took it into his head that he, too, would attend the meeting: it was famous sport for him to run up and about the wild hollows and deep lanes and water-courses that lay between his home and the meeting-house; and such an amusement, once a week, would not have been denied to him, had he been contented to stay quietly in the stable with the horses, or lie outside the door till his master was ready to return home. But Pry had a will of his own, and he chose to lie at his master's feet in summer, and before the warm stove in winter, while the Friends continued their sitting together; and though it must be acknowledged that his behaviour was unexceptionable, still it was looked upon as somewhat indecorous to introduce a dog into so grave a company. The family, therefore, well knowing the pertinacity of Pry's temper, gave orders that he should be tied up on meeting-mornings, and thus kept at home perforce. For a week or two this was done, to poor Pry's great discomfort, but at length he outwitted them. On these mornings he was never to

be found; so that he secured his own liberty, and then joined his master about half way on the road, or rather kept him in view, and demurely followed him to the place of worship. After a little time longer, when he supposed the discipline to have somewhat relaxed, though he would never venture his liberty within the house on these especial mornings, not even to come for his breakfast, he took his station at the top of the village street, within sight of the doors and windows of his master's house, and there patiently waited till he saw signs of setting out, and then trotted on in great security and good humour. When Pry's master saw, by all these tricks and all this doggish wisdom, that he was bent upon his purpose, he made no further opposition, and Pry became a regular and authorized attender of Friends' meetings. But now comes the strangeness of the story. About once in every two months the meeting was held at a distant place, where the family but rarely attended. The dog knew when the regular day of the week came round, and invariably set out, trotting by himself to the very meeting-house door, which when he found shut, he examined with a curious kind of canine

wonderment; and then, after having walked over the graveyard, and round into the stable, without finding any token of arrival, sedately turned back again, and though apparently perplexed and disappointed, soon set his nose to the ground, and traced out all the wonders of the homeward way.

Now, that a dog should know when it was the meeting day by some external signs; as, the bringing up of a horse, the putting on of his master's gaiters—or perhaps by the conversation of the family—does not seem so extraordinary, considering the wonderful instances of canine acuteness which we have on record; but that he should actually know, without ever mistaking it, when the day came—though there was no getting any sign of it—not even anything said about it—certainly was singular. The dog, though he had intellect enough to know the recurring day in seven, had yet not sufficient intellect to discover the regular exception, which happened about every eighth week.

Mrs. Manners and all the children agreed that this was the most wonderful story they had ever heard, and seemed, at first, as if they could not believe it,

but Uncle Thomas assured them it was true. He said also, that he had heard of a more wonderful meeting-going dog, living in North Carolina; and the children wanted him very much to tell them about it; but the old man smiled, and said it was getting too late, and the doctor said he must not talk much, so he would leave this for part of his next year's Christmas sayings. The children looked sorry, but could not object, and Julian exclaimed, "Oh! how I do wish I could travel, like you, Uncle Thomas, and see and hear so many strange sights and stories."

"Well, well!" said the old gentleman, "perhaps you may, some day, but you will not find it quite so agreeable as you suppose. Let me read you a conversation between youth and age, about travelling." And he read the following lines.

YOUTH AND AGE.

YOUTH.

I HEAR of the traveller's view
From the lofty mountain's brow,

Of the skies of cloudless blue
And the trackless fields of snow,
And I think when my schoolboy's days
Are over, and I'm set free,
How I'll tread those perilous ways,
And how happy I shall be!

AGE.

Young man, there are chasms deep
In those trackless fields of snow;
Where the sparkling glaciers sleep,
There is ruin and death below.
Where the rocks are wild and high,
And the clouds beneath them sail,
Ten thousand dangers lie,
Unknown, in the sheltered vale.

YOUTH.

Talk not of danger to me!
I love the daring thought;
And a hunter I would be
Where the bounding chamois is caught.

I love to hear the breeze,
And the distant thunder-shock;
I love to climb the trees
When their branches wave and rock.

AGE.

But the lofty branch may break,
And the distant storm come near,
And the giant heart may quake,
And the cheek grow pale with fear:
Then, the cottage-fire burns bright,
Where all the loved ones meet,
And home is a blessed sight,
And safety doubly dear.

YOUTH.

Still, still, I would wish to make
My way to some distant land;
I would sail on Leman's lake,
Or loiter on its strand;
And while history's page recalls
Its glory and renown,
I would gaze on Geneva's walls
When the evening sun goes down.

AGE.

Oh! many a toilsome day
And many a weary night
Must come, and pass away,
Before that glorious sight!
And when thou hast seen thy fill
Of nations, and of men,—
When time, thou hast learned to kill
By constant change—what then?

YOUTH.

I shall know a thousand things
That schools could never have taught;
As the lark that soars and sings
Is too wise to be snared and caught;
All the wonders I shall seek,
For which other bosoms burn;
And when I choose to speak,
My friends shall listen, and learn.

AGE.

'Tis not the sights that please
The observer's curious eyes:

It is not what he sees
  That makes the traveller wise:
He may pass from door to door,
  From land to land may roam,
But he must still be poor
  Who brings no wisdom home.

When the poetry was finished, it was after ten o'clock. Uncle Thomas rose to go;—there was a deal of kissing, and some tears; and away he went, leaving all the little ones looking after him, from the front door. So ended this year's holiday.

THE END.

C. SHERMAN, PRINTER.